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Revelation

Chapter 6 - Revealing the Coming Forces

Breaking the 7 Seals (vs. 9-11)

Revelation 6:9-11: When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

Well, we come to the Book of Revelation, and we realize that there are things that are hidden, things that are

veiled. So, the book itself means to unveil those things that are hidden. Christ is the One that is worthy to unveil. But not only is He worthy to unveil, but He is also the Light that unveils them. So, as we begin to see the Lamb breaking the seals, claiming the world for Himself but also revealing the things of the world to us. It is what He's basically saying in Revelation 1.

So, if you look with me in Revelation 1:19, Christ tells John, "I need you to write these things down." What sort of things is He wanting him to write down? Well, just read with me in verse 19.

(Revelation 1:19) "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things."

Now, the one thing that you really have missing is the past. Because the things that are seen are the things that he's seeing at this juncture and the things that are, are the things of the present and the things that shall be are the things to come. However, He does not talk about the past, and the point is that "We're looking towards the things that are about to happen so that you can

understand that I control all things.” It is virtually the picture of the world from the point of the cross. What changed?

If you just take a moment and look with me in Colossians 1.

(Colossians 1:13) “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

(Colossians 1:14) in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

(Colossians 1:15) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”

Now, the point is not that He came from creation. He is first born, and then creation. How do we know? Well, look at the next verse.

(Colossians 1:16) “For by Him all things were created...”

So, He's the Creator of all things.

“For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens...”

By the way, if you go back to “firstborn,” born of who? Directly from God, from the bosom of the Father. The picture that we oftentimes give you is, who is Christ? Well, it's the heart of God. If you were able to pull the heart of God out and then send that heart to earth, there you go. That's Jesus. Always and ever eternally been a part of God; never ceases to be a part of God.

It says in verse 16, “For by Him all things were created...” In other words, what was the motive? What was the intent? What was the heart of God in creating all things? Jesus, that He might bring to salvation because He loves you. “For God so loved the world.”

(Colossians 1:16) “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

(Colossians 1:17) He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

It's the father's good pleasure to bring all things and to reconcile all things through Him, as He goes on to say. Understanding that will help you understand what

Revelation is about, because the Lamb is claiming all things to Himself, reconciling the world to Himself. Now, here again, even though we hear “all things,” it almost immediately interjects in our head, “Ok. So, He means spiritual things.” No, He means all things. All things. So, that which is about to happen from the time of the cross now to the end of the ages is pointing to the fact that God is reconciling the world to Himself, and that everything that is happening, He's going to be unveiling and revealing. So, when you have the seven seals that are now broken, what you're going to be seeing are things that have been kept secret, things that are veiled, until the revealing of Christ and Christ is the revealer of these things. I'll put that another way, all is not only revealed by Christ, but what is real is being revealed by Jesus. In other words, He's going to be revealing that which is false and that which is true, and that which reconciles and that which doesn't and that which holds back the reconciliation. There's a battle going on, and He's revealing the battle; everything that's happening. Sometimes we think, “Well, that event just happened.” It didn't just happen. There's a battle; there's a war going on

and Christ is redeeming the world for Himself. What He is also doing is He's revealing to you and to me that it is a battle. It's not just something that happened. It's not just an event. It is something that had to happen. More specifically, it is the fighting of man for that reconciliation, and there are forces involved, and He begins to talk about these forces. Now, let me just say this, the forces in and of themselves are fundamentally innocuous. The power is not a bad thing, but power used in the hands of man is a terrible thing. So, He begins to deal with each of these forces that are being used and manipulated, but Christ is the One that is revealing them, and you go, "How do I know if that force is wrong?" You go, "Well, let's see. Line it up to the Lamb." So, if you take the Lamb, Jesus Christ, and you look at how He lived his life, how do I know that a government is wrong? How do I know they're off? How do I know that they're not telling the truth? How do I know that a group of people, a tribe, whoever they are, how do I know that a religion is off? Does it look like Jesus? No. Well, then He's revealing the holes in that theory, and as He begins to pull apart this title deed of the world, He begins to reveal these things.

As we've gone through, we've seen the forces, and the forces really are displayed through horses that are going through, and He talks about the white horse and the black horse and the red horse. Then, He talks about the pale horse. As He goes through, each of these horses are revealing something.

If we could just summarize briefly again as we come to Revelation 6, let's just reiterate what these forces are doing and let me try to make it as clear as I can that these are real forces that Christ is revealing and they've happened. Personally, as I look at the list, they're all dangerous forces depending on who the rider is.

Interestingly enough, as you look through the first few verses, it never mentions the name of any rider until the end, and at the end, He says, "Let me tell you the name of the writer. Death, and Hades is following." You go, "Ok. Now, we know the name of the rider." So, who's steering the horses? Who's steering the forces that are manipulating in the world? Death and Hades. Now, remember, the word "*hadēs*" makes reference to the place of not being seen. It just literally means not seen.

So, what it's talking about is the loss of significance. The fact that the man next to Christ on the cross says, "I want You to remember me," is saying that "I want to be seen." Because the psalmist will go, in the Old Testament, "Don't send me to Sheol. Who can praise You? Who can be seen?" See? So, it's a place of forgetfulness and there's a rider on these forces that wants to obliterate you and wants to cause you to be forgotten, but God wants you remembered. So, the war is for who you are. So, there's an interesting battle that's going on. So, whether it's the white horse or the black horse, all the way through, these forces have an agenda, and this is what He's revealing. I think one of the most dangerous, obviously, is the white horse because it seems so good. It's a white horse.

It's no mistake the way Revelation is written, by the time you come to Revelation 19, which is towards the end, and Christ is coming in all of His glory, what is He riding? A white horse. The wonderful thing is Christ says, "Let me show you what true goodness is." And you have this force in the world that has always been in the world, that's always been in the world. If I could label the white horse, I

would label it “good intentions”. I would label it “good and thoughtful and caring ideas”. “We're helping you. We're here to bless you.” And of course, all these things happen. What it says is that the goal of the white horse was to conquer. Your perception was, “The white horse is here to do me a favor. It's here to rescue me.” He goes, “No, no, the white horse is here to conquer you.” How do I know? Well, let me ask you a question, did the guy riding on the white horse die for you? So, you put the white horse next to the Lamb, and the Lamb unveils what that white horse is about. No, the white horse was using me. Ok, so, obviously then that's not a white horse.

When you go down through history, the religion has been battling throughout the years. Let me just give you some examples.

The Jewish Roman War, which actually really spiked up around 70 A.D., in which Jerusalem was destroyed. But you consider there were 3 million estimated deaths in those wars. It's Jewish-Roman wars over what? Good intentions, faith. The Romans felt like they had the flag of integrity; the Jews felt like they were fighting for God.

When you go to John 16:2, Jesus says, "The day is coming when people are going to kill you and they're going to do it in My name." So, you go through history, and you see all these examples.

One example as well is of course the Holy Crusades, the Holy Cause that was given and they actually estimate that 1.7 million died in the Crusades, which actually happened over quite a period of years, but wow, over holy crusades? Holy? Does it look like Jesus? Did Jesus come to earth slaughtering people? It doesn't look anything like Him.

7 million people die in the war between the Muslims and Spain and Portugal. 7 million. It's between 7 and 11 in the 1400s.

The Protestants and the Catholics fight in France. Clearly, over a million in that one.

In the 1600's, I love this one, the Irish versus the Scottish Protestants. They were both Protestants. Over a million die in that.

From what we understand, the Spanish conquest for the sake of the faith with the Aztecs of the Incas, 10s of millions; some estimate 30 to 40 million people died for the faith.

I'm not pronouncing it correctly. I know. Qing dynasty in China versus the Heavenly Kingdom dynasty. So, that sounds pretty righteous, doesn't it? From what I understand, 10 to 30 million people died in that.

Hitler does this thing called a pure race. He calls himself the "Third Reich". What that means is that he is piggybacking on the 1st and the Second Reich. The First Reich was the Holy Roman government. So, the second one was Charlemagne, and Hitler declares himself the Third Reich, and because of that, from what we understand 6 million or more European Jews die; 11 million beyond or with that, besides the Jews. All under the name of, "We're going to purify a race." These are white horses. This is not to mention how many people have died for independence, for freedom. We've even had civil wars killing people for what we believe is right. The bottom line is that our perception is, "The only way

that you could defeat any evil or to get our cause to be exemplified is to kill people.” So, through the years, conquering has been the answer to dealing with whatever we believe is against what we perceive to be our righteous cause. So, good intentions have killed a lot of people, and this is what Christ is revealing. Why is it that the Lamb has to break the seal? Because only the Lamb can reveal that these things don't work. You have to have something real next to the fake in order to reveal that which is fake.

The second seal that is broken, obviously, as we go on in the passage is the bloody horse that comes, and it is by understanding man's pursuit of pleasure and prosperity and possessions. We read James 4, what's the source of your quarrels? Is it not your pleasures that wage war on your members? I mean, why are you fighting? The text is actually making reference to brother is killing brother. Why is he doing that? The one young man comes to Jesus, and he goes, “Tell my brother to give me my share of the inheritance.” Why are you mad at your brother? Money, and the pleasures of that money; the desires that you

have. The Scripture begins to reveal that we wage war for the sake of our pleasures.

The third seal is the dark force that's coming, and it really is dealing with the weights and the money itself. If you look in Matthew 6, just to kind of give you a picture of this, it says,

(Matthew 6:19) “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth...”

(Matthew 6:20) “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...”

Then it says,

(Matthew 6:21) “for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

But now, watch this in verse 22,

(Matthew 6:22) “The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.”

(Matthew 6:23) “But if your eye is bad...”

“*Ponēros*,” which means “greedy”.

If your eye is full of greed,

“... your whole body will be full of darkness...”

That would be the dark force, wouldn't it?

“... If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”

That's why he says in verse 24,

(Matthew 6:24) “No one can serve two masters...”

Well, what are the two masters? The Lord or money.

That's the text.

He says, “For this reason, I don't want you to be anxious.” So, whether it's your pleasures or whether it's money, 1 Timothy 6 says the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, and some, by going after it, have found themselves in a lot of hurt and pain. So, you say, “How do I know I'm going after money?” Put the Lamb next to it. Though, He were rich, He became poor, that you might have the wealth of Him in Christ Jesus. I mean, in every case, the Lamb is revealing that which is a force in the world. These are real forces in the world, and if you take the Lamb out of the picture, in some ways they look like, “Well, what's wrong with making money or what's wrong with pursuing

after that?" There's nothing wrong with making money, but pursuing it and loving it, that's where it gets into that destructive realm. So, all the way through, He begins to reveal these things.

What's interesting is, as you go back to Revelation 6 and you come to this fourth horse and the pale and ultimately, the rider is defined as Death, what we're seeing is that we have this lifeless force that is coming and literally will use anything and everything to rob of life. People wonder, "What's wrong with loving money?" Well, nothing, but if you looked at people that love money, they're lifeless. It's like they're dead. They have no real feelings for people. They don't really care deeply. They just see you as a commodity, and in every case, when you look at these forces that are being used, they just literally suck the life out. I mean, it's no wonder we have got a pale rider here, and Christ is revealing that the wages of sin is death, that going the wrong way, sin, is missing the mark, not doing what God says, is going to take life out of you. Everything that is not of Christ is going to drain you of life.

If you go on, whose following him? (Revelation 6:8) Hades. So, you'll be insignificant. What is it that that makes a life feel void and empty? It's because you're following death, and it follows you all the way and it takes you into this realm. So, you begin to see a deteriorating conscience; you begin to see human decency going by the wayside; you begin to see natural affection going by the wayside and callous, cold indifference begins to settle in. In fact, probably one of the best descriptions of this is found in Romans 1. If you look with me Romans 1. You know the text.

(Romans 1:21) “For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

(Romans 1:22) Professing to be wise, they became fools,

(Romans 1:23) and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

(Romans 1:24) Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

(Romans 1:25) For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever...”

And I would put in there, man worshipped himself as well.

(Romans 1:26) “For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

(Romans 1:27) and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent...”

By the way, Scripture is actually calling homosexuality indecent.

“... committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

(Romans 1:28) And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper.”

We're not talking about sanctimonious; we're talking about humanity.

(Romans 1:29) “being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,

(Romans 1:30) slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

(Romans 1:31) without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful.”

I don't know. I didn't see one good thing in the list. What it's telling us is that you proceed from bad to worse, and in many respects, the forces piggyback on each other. I mean, people will go after money and they'll tag on to it, “But it's a holy cause.” I mean, they're all kind of mixed together, but the rider is death, and what follows it is the insignificance of our lives.

I love the way that it ends at the very end. It says that God will throw Death and Hades into the lake of fire forever.

“I'm getting rid of these guys because the influence is just destroying.” But at the very beginning, what we're seeing is the influence, and these riders begin to move these forces to destroy. The initial thought may be, “Well, they look like they are going in a good direction.” And God says, “Do you see who the rider is? Ok, so now you know where he's steering you.”

So, by the time you come to the fifth seal, and this is the one we're looking at today, what we begin to understand is not only what these forces are but what their intention is. Remember, Christ is the Savior of the world. There is an evil and he has one agenda, to destroy. Think about it. Savior- life; destroyer- death. So, this is the two choices. I mean, it goes all the way back to Moses, “You have before you life and death, choose life.” So, there's just two clear choices. The battle is going to be for the souls. Now, what is it that brings life? The gospel. I'm not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God. For God so loved the world that He gave you everlasting life by virtue

of His Son. Christ came, "I am the Light of the world, and the light is the life of men." So, where do you think the force is going to be hitting the strongest? The testimony. So, all the forces through the ages, for instance, you go back to the white horse, what was that all about? Well, evil was using good intentions to muddy the water, right? Look, if you look back on those days, it was the true believers that were really being slaughtered. They weren't the ones riding the horses. The true believers were following Christ, and if you're following Christ, you're trying to save life. You're not trying to destroy life. So, all the way through those years and even now, I mean from my understanding, I think it was the BBC that actually reported that 5,000 people died last November, and we're just talking one month. So, one month, 5,000 people died from the hands of jihadists. So, what, do you think it stopped? It continues under the guise and under the name of righteousness or a righteous cause or whatever. But how many has that twisted? How many people have said, "Well, if that's religion, I don't want any." And I go, "Yeah, that's religion. But that's not Jesus. Jesus doesn't look like this." But how powerful that force

has literally shoveled millions of people into hell. How powerful that is. Not only the people that bought it but the people that were angry against it and perceived it as God. Let me just say this, if you perceive that kind of work as God's work, you don't know God and you're not looking for Him because God is nothing like that. So, to mistake that as being God, there is something wrong with your heart. I mean, probably the worst thing is that you think you're better than God. “Well, I would never do that. I'm nicer than that.” Ok, so, you're nicer than God? So, what you need is the Lamb because when you see the Lamb, are you nicer than God? “No, I’m not nice.” Ok. I'm not going to go there. But you can see the power of these forces to condemn people not only to death but to oblivion and the denial of the truth.

So, as you come to Revelation 6 and you jump on down to the fifth seal in verse 9,

(Revelation 6:9) “When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony...”

By the way, “testimony” is where we get the word “*martyrs*,” making reference to a truth worth dying for. So, what is He demonstrating? Well, if you look within the passage, He's demonstrating that there are souls that were directly targeted by these forces. Now, let me kind of go into this realm. The human world is fundamentally “patsies”, but there are forces that are moving, and this is one of the things that this is trying to reveal. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities and powers of the air. What's moving the Hitlers? I mean, you just go down the list throughout the years. What is it that causes them to just want to conquer and they have this insatiable desire to devour? What is that and what brings them so much power? What gives them the power? How could Alexander with such a small army conquer so many people? It's ridiculous. How did that happen? There must have been another force that was going on. So, all the way through the years, you've seen these forces that are vying. What are they really trying to do? They're trying to silence life. See, why is the rider death? He's trying to silence life.

So, if you look in verse 9,

(Revelation 6:9) “When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar...”

Why underneath? Well, what happens to blood when it's shed? It flows underneath. The perception, of course, is, “We got them. They're dead.” God goes, “Nope. I hear them.” It says in Hebrews 11, the blood of Abel still speaks. What is He talking about? Well, this is a wonderful thing that He begins to unveil because what He's going to unveil is that evil cannot silence an acceptable sacrifice because it was acceptable to God. Why did they die? For the word of truth, for life. God is for life, and He proclaims life through His Son. Why did these people die?

Proclaiming the life. Guess what? They'll never die. He will never let those proclaiming life die. Just as a reminder, it was the altar that God made to be the throne. Even all the way back in the Old Testament, when you go into the holy of holies, what is in the holy of holies? The ark of the covenant. What is that? It's a seat. What kind of seat? It's called the mercy seat. Why is it the throne in the holy of holies? Because Christ will be the One that reigns; Who

gives His life for all mankind. The sacrifice and the love of Christ is going to be that which reigns in the heavens, and this is what He demonstrates. “The Lamb that was slain? Really, that's the One that wins?” He goes, “The altar wins.” Jesus says, “I tell you, if you'll give your life, you'll gain it.”

There's a couple of passages. If you look with me in Matthew 5, just to kind of give you some ideas in this. I mean, here again, Matthew is dealing with the kingdom of heaven or the rule of heaven or the standards of heaven. In Matthew 5, He not only says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” but He says this in verse 10,

(Matthew 5:10) “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

(Matthew 5:11) “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.”

(Matthew 5:12) “Rejoice and be glad...”

Well, you say, “No, I'm dead. I can't rejoice.” No, you're alive, and you'll never die because you were slaughtered on the altar of life, and you can't die there.

“Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

God has declared, “We win.”

If you look at Matthew 10, it kind of gives the same declaration. In fact, Jesus sent His disciples out and He says, we made reference to this earlier,

(Matthew 10:16) “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves...”

OK. Well, sheep aren't going to win that battle. They do in this case. The sheep win.

“... so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.”

He says,

(Matthew 10:18) “and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.”

(Matthew 10:19) “But when they hand you over...”

That would be not a good thing.

“... do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say.

(Matthew 10:20) “For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

(Matthew 10:21) “Brother will betray brother to death...”

I wonder why that would be? Pleasure and money and all kinds of things get in the way. I mean, people don't mind you taking a stand, but once it affects what they're going after, then they just get nasty.

“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.”

“That will never happen.” It will.

(Matthew 10:22) “You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.”

Do you know what “endure to the end” means? It means you don't compromise. It means you'll die a martyr. That's enduring to the end.

But He turns and He says, “But you're the ones that will be saved.”

He says in verse 26,

(Matthew 10:26) “Therefore do not fear...”

(Matthew 10:28) “Do not fear...”

(Matthew 10:31) “So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.”

(Matthew 10:39) “He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.”

Evil is trying to silence life. The problem is that it can't. If you're proclaiming life, you can't be silenced.

(Revelation 6:9) “When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God...”

“*Logos*” - Because of the life. In the beginning was the *logos*. The “Word was with God and the Word was God.” “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” And “in Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.” You couldn't silence life. They begin to proclaim the word of God and because of the testimony as they died, as

martyrs, they maintained this truth. They never gave it up. The Greek word in the text is literally they tenaciously held on to it, even as they were slaying them. “Let go of it.” “I’m not letting go.” “Why?” “It’s the words of life.” And God rescued them. How do we know? (verse 10) Because they’re crying out. If you're dead and you're gone, you don't exist anymore. Your death has come to make you silent, to make you never seen again, and yet they are seen; they are heard.

(Revelation 6:10) “and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true...”

“We know that You're just. We know there's no one like You. We know that this is not a contest that they can win.”

“...will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

More specifically, those who embrace the things of the earth.

(Revelation 6:11) “And there was given to each of them a white robe...”

Don't misunderstand this. God's not just putting something on to comfort them. The word is not as much "white" as it is "bright," and it has less to do with once again color and has more to do with light. The word "*leukos*" means "shining brightly". So, He gives them a robe in which they shine bright. Now, once again, what is the purpose of the church? To be lights in the world. What has He declared them? Lights. You've won. The darkness could not silence you. You have won. We have won. Victory is ours. The light shines. So, He puts on them a white, or we'll say, a bright and dazzling, brilliant robe.

"... and they were told that they should rest..."

"*Anapauō*" makes reference to "Calm down. I've got this." And it's not as much, here again, that they're laying down, sleeping. It's "I can see you're stirred up. You don't need to be. I'm going to do this. I know what I'm doing."

And it says,

"...that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also."

What is He talking about? Well, there are three things that He's really showing in the passage. The first is that we already mentioned, evil cannot silence an acceptable sacrifice. The second is evil cannot silence enduring flames. The light's going to shine. If I could put it another way, what is really the light of the gospel? The light of the gospel is the love of Christ. You know why these guys are dead? I'm going to tell you why. Because they didn't fight back. I want you to think about that. What makes them different than the Crusades? What makes them different than the ones on the list? They didn't fight back. Why? Because the love of Christ constrains them. The love of Christ in us will say, "I'll die for you." The world will say, "We'll conquer you." Christ will say, "I'll die for you, and I'll conquer the world through that love." That's a powerful force, isn't it? The world is trying to silence that message. They're trying to silence the message. "Don't believe in God. Don't believe that He's the way. Don't believe that Christ is the Light. Don't put all of your faith and trust in Him." What are you going to do about it? "We're going to pray for you, brother." They're going to throw out hostility; maybe sometimes they'll lock you up,

maybe they'll beat you. Do you see Paul, in any case, "Put 'em up. Put 'em up." You don't see Paul doing that. What does he do? "I'm going, guys. Hey, maybe in prison it's worked out really well. Some of the Pretorian guard are coming to know the Lord." You go, "Paul, you do understand you're in prison?" "Yes." "You do understand that you didn't do anything wrong?" "Yes. What's your point?" There's something about the light that can't be put out, and the passage is saying, "They couldn't put you out, guys." Evil cannot silence the enduring flames. Let me just say this, testimony and the light are one and the same because though we oftentimes perceive a testimony as something being said, the greater effect really is the light of God. So, evil can't silence that.

As Romans 8 says, "What could separate me from the love of God?" And as Paul would say, "And it is His love that constrains me." So, for some strange reason the light just can't be put out even though people lash against you, even though they're hostile against you, they revile. I mean, I think that's one of the main points of 1 Peter, "While being reviled, He didn't revile in return, but He

gave a blessing instead.” And you go, “Ok, so, that's how you're going to win?” That's it. That's the game plan. The game plan is you have a boss that is cruel and is mean and what are you going to do? You're going to show them honor and respect. “Ok, that's how you're going to win?” That's how we're going to win. You have a husband that's not doing what he should be, but by your quiet and gentle, respectful behavior, you're going to win him without a word. “That's how?” That's the plan. “And you actually believe that's going to work?” “Yeah.” Look at the Crusades. They didn't work. Nobody was better because of those. But watch everybody that's given their life to Christ. Look at the change in their lives. That works. All you have to do is put the Lamb up next to them. Evil cannot silence in any way the enduring flame. It's an unfailing love. 1 Corinthians 13, “Love never fails.” It can't be put out. Evil will not and could never silence those destined for life. It can't do that. Jesus says in the Gospel of John, “They come, and no one snatches them from My hand.”

The way Jesus puts it in John 6:37,

“All that the Father gives Me will come...”

(John 10:28) “and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish...”

That means “You can kill them; they come back.”

(John 6:39) “... I lose nothing...”

All is being revealed. Evil will not silence those destined for life.

It's an encouraging passage, and it's revealing to us that not only are those that had gone before us, but God is even preparing many more to be enduring lights. See, the world would perceive that we lost, but we see the whole picture, that God was just making us enduring lights. How do you know they're enduring lights? Because darkness couldn't change them. The testimony in the word of God would never be moved. It never was altered. It didn't matter what was done to them, and they didn't have to kill somebody to prove it. They had to die to prove it, and strangely enough, it was that altar that brought about the salvation of all, and death could not hold, and we believe in the resurrection of Christ, don't we? A lot of things are

being revealed. If you understand what He's saying within the passage, it gets really clear, and Christ is bringing all things to and through Himself and I'm so thankful for that power.

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank You for Your Son and for the power of the message that we have. We oftentimes really underestimate this message. We perceive that in some way, maybe we need to interject something else or help out that power. But it's the power of God. It's a resurrection power. It is a light that cannot be in any way blown out. Father, You're calling us to the real, and we are that which literally exposes the false. By us living the truth, false is revealed. You tell us in Your word, in Matthew 24, that in the last days, there are going to be

many coming in Your name and they're going to be doing stuff that You would never do. Lord, may we be bright; bright enough to be inextinguishable, a love that flames cannot be put out.

Your head bowed and your eyes closed. We're called to be light; the church is called to be light. We're supposed to be different. If there is no difference between us and the world, then there is no light. The world needs to see something real, and the world needs to actually see people that believe in this thing called everlasting life. It's so powerful that even death cannot put it out. If you and I are walking in fear, or if we're walking in trepidation, if we are even concerned about death, how can we be that light? You've decided to follow Jesus. Take up your cross.