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Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

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The Two Prophets

Revelation 11:1-19

Prayer: *Father, I just again, I thank you for your grace, I thank you for answers to prayer, I thank you for your goodness to us and I thank you for your word which you've given to us. And again, this is not easy stuff to go through, Lord, this is very difficult stuff and so I just want to pray for your grace, your power, the presence of your Holy Spirit as we work our way through Revelation again this day, and I pray that it would be of permanent value. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, we're up to the actually the tenth chapter of Revelation and once again we're going to have Peter read for us. If you would, Peter, read for us Revelation 10:1-11. *Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded. And when the seven thunders had*

sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down." And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets. Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. And I was told, "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings."

Well, if you remember, this judgment of God that we're reading about, this judgment actually started out with the seven seal judgments. If you remember the first four of those judgments were the four horsemen and that was followed by the plea of the saints

that were under the altar, and that was followed by the judgment that had people crying out for the mountains and the rocks to literally fall on them.

We got to the sixth seal judgment and we found out it was an interlude, it was just like a pause between the sixth and the seventh judgments. And we've now come to a similar interlude in these trumpet judgments. What we've heard so far is that six of those judgments have taken place and as I said the last time, these judgments have taken place and the earth is in shambles. I mean half of its population is dead, the seas are polluted beyond measure as is the fresh water; the sun, the moon, and the stars have been diminished, there's monstrous creatures boiling out from literally the pit of hell. In addition 200-million man army has been raised and we don't know if it's populated by humans or monsters literally from hell, we don't know. We do know that the earth at this point is actually shattered by these judgments from God.

And so last we come to the end of the sixth trumpet judgment which produces yet another interlude or pause before the seventh judgment. John here is the speaker and he's no longer in heaven, he's come down to earth and he sees this enormous angel. He says: *Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in*

a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. He had a little scroll open in his hand.

Now at first you might think that this angel is the Lord Jesus himself, I mean, because the language seems very similar to descriptions we've heard of Christ. His face was like the sun, his legs were like a pillar of fire. But we know this angel is not Christ because later on in the same chapter the angel actually swears to Jesus himself. But what he declares to John, what he declares is known as the seven thunder judgments. And that's basically all we know about those judgments. I mean, John hears all about them and then with pen in hand as he's about to write them down, he is told -- quote -- "*Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down.*" John hears the very same thing that Daniel heard from an angel thousands of years previously when he was told about things at the end. In *Daniel 12* it says: "*But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.*"

And so for reasons known only to God, John is prevented from revealing what he's learned about these seven thunder judgments. Obediently he puts down his pen and he seals the information, he

knows that God said in *Deuteronomy 29*: *"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."* See, that voice in heaven which again that voice was probably the Lord Jesus Christ, that voice told John that these judgments must remain secret and that they belong to the Lord until the timing is right.

And again, speaking of timing, my wife Janice raised an interesting thought about timing here. You know, we've talked about all of these different judgments. She said, what if these judgments happened with long periods of time between them? I mean, that is to say, what if the seal judgments or the trumpet judgments each took place with hundreds of years between them? People would have a very hard time connecting the dots between all of them.

Well, once these trumpet judgments begin, I believe God is going to unfold them in rapid fire and there's going to be no delay. In fact the angel, this one that we're describing who's standing beside the sea and the earth, the angel makes a solemn oath that addresses that very thing. This is what he says. It says: *And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it,*

and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay.

But then John hears something truly bizarre. He says: *"Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."* And again, this scroll is also referred to as "the little scroll" or "the book" or "the little book" and because John is told to use it to prophesy to all of the nations, we just assume the scroll that he's referring to here is the scripture. But then he says this: *So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."*

Well, just what does it mean to take the scripture in and eat it? I mean, it's the very same question that we raise about the bread and the cup on communion Sundays when I repeat the phrase that Jesus uttered, and he said, *"This is my body, take and eat."* I think in both instances what Jesus is saying in communion itself and what he's saying to John here is that we are to take Jesus and his word into our very being and make it a part of us in the very same way that what we eat becomes a part of who we are.

You know, the cliché is "you are what you eat" but that same principle applies to the scripture as well. You become, you become what you take in from God's word. And the more you make it a part

of your being, the more it flows from you effortlessly. You can't read the scripture like it's a novel. You have to read the scripture like your life depended on it because it does. I think of what Jesus said in *Matthew 4:4*. It says: *But he answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

You know, one thing that progressive Christians love to accuse conservative orthodox Christians of is the sin they refer to as bibliolatry. They claim that conservatives are guilty of the sin of literally worshiping the Bible, that is that they make the Bible an idol. That instead of listening to the Spirit of God and the moving of that Spirit that they are tying ideologically to dead letters written in a book. I've known as awful lot of conservative orthodox Christians and I confess to you, I've never met anyone who worships the Bible. I've met lots of people who understand exactly what Christ said, that you cherish every single word that comes from the mouth of God not because it's written in a book but because literally it's God's heart and God's mind.

The fact is that the primary way that God communicates to people is through words. I mean progressives love to quote what they claim is the words of St. Francis of Assisi who says, "Preach the gospel at all times, and if you must, use words." Problem is by most

accounts St. Francis never said that. But even more so, even more difficult is what it says is a virtual impossibility. You see, you cannot preach the gospel without using words. And I get it. On one level the quote makes perfect sense, I mean, if the gospel doesn't have your life and your actions matching up with your words, your gospel essentially is meaningless. But the other side of that equation, that words are a last ditch necessity, that's equally false. Paul's letter to Timothy states the case clearly. He says: *Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.*

So the angel tells John something that everyone who shares the gospel should already know, it is at the same time both sweet and bitter. And we know the scripture's often depicted as sweet as honey. *Psalm 119* says: *How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!* But what about the bitter part? I mean, how is it that the scripture can be both sweet and sour? Well, the fact is God intends for us who deliver his word in a way that captures the essence of things both sweet and sour, and it all depends on how people react to God's word. I remember a verse I was taught many, many years ago from *Isaiah 55*. It says: *"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes*

out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

Way back when I was taught certainly by well-intentioned people that that meant that the gospel will always do its work of bringing people closer to Christ. And what I didn't understand is that statement is true but not in the way that it was understood by those who were teaching me. I mean it's a fact God's word never, never returns void; but understand, it doesn't say that it will always draw people closer to the kingdom. Instead what it says is *"it shall accomplish that which I purpose."* Sometimes that's exactly the opposite of bringing people to Christ. Rather it's demonstrating that God is right and just to punish those who repeatedly reject his offer.

You know, Paul speaks at length about this sacred task that all of us are given and it is uniquely a measure of sweet and sour, both of which honor and glorify the Lord. The sweet is that glorious moment that you're able to share the gospel with somebody who receives it with open arms and an open heart and it doesn't get any better than that; but equally glorious in a very different way is what happens when the gospel is openly rejected. You see, there it's not the mercy of God that's being honored but rather God's

justice. This is how Paul puts it in *2 Corinthians 2:14*. He said:
But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?

You see, what Paul is saying is our task is not necessarily to save people. He says who's sufficient for that? That's God's business; that's God's purview. And as we pointed out over and over again, Jesus has told us repeatedly it's an impossible task for human beings to undertake because only God can change hearts. But that's not the task that we're given. I mean, the task that we are given is to spread the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ everywhere. Paul tells us exactly how that fragrance is going to be received, I mean, some are going to receive it as the sweet smell of life itself and others are going to receive it as the stench of death. The amazing thing is that Paul says regardless of the outcome, we will still be leading in a triumphal procession. In other words, what he is saying is when you share the gospel faithfully, you can't possibly lose. You're either going to bring glory and honor to the mercy of God to those who embrace what you're hearing or you're going to bring glory and honor to the justice of God to

those who outright reject it. I mean, that scroll may be sweet in your mouth and it also may be bitter in your stomach and both of them will bring honor and glory to God. So John is instructed to eat the scroll, and just as promised it's sweet in his mouth and bitter in his stomach. He says: *And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter.*

Well, chapter ten ends with John's instruction and it's instruction that applies to us as equally as it applied to him. Verse 11 says: *And I was told, "You must again prophesy" -- that's speak truth, something all of us can do -- "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings."*

Chuck Swindoll said it well about this, he said: "Just like John, we have roles to play in God's ultimate plan. We can't call ourselves 'apostles,' and we don't receive literal visions and revelations from God. We're not required to swallow prophetic books to utter inspired words. But each of us has been given a crucial mission to share the good news of salvation with the world (Matt 28:19-20). Yet just like John, we must first internalize the message, allowing it to become a part of our own lives." (Exalting Jesus in Revelation (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (p. 219). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.)

So John is given yet another instruction at the start of chapter eleven. He is told he's to measure the Lord's temple. Peter, could you read for us Revelation 11:1-19. Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire. And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and

make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.

Okay. Well, the first instruction is to measure the temple. And now measuring the temple in itself is a problem if you take what is being said literally, I mean, remember it's the year, 96, maybe anywhere from 96 to 98, and if you recall Jesus' prediction and the actual fact of history, that is that the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70. So there's no temple to measure if you're thinking literally of the building that God once dwelled in.

And here's where things get very, very difficult. There are so many different theories, so many different understandings that it's dizzying just trying to understand. I have so many different commentaries, so many different approaches. I mean some folks say

the temple is no longer a building and what it is in fact is God's people, and clearly they have scripture to back that up. 1 *Corinthians 6* says: *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

So these folks believe that God here is referring to the church. There's others who believe that the temple is going to be rebuilt and that these measurements that God is asking for is going to apply to that temple that for years now people very been speaking about rebuilding. Others see it as the Jewish nation being brought once again into the fold. And I'm of the opinion held by still others that Jesus is referring to the utter destruction that took place when that temple was destroyed and that that produced a hardening of the Jewish people that extends even to today. And I say that because of a comment that Jesus made in Luke's gospel about the absolute destruction of the temple and the scattering throughout the world of the Jewish people. Jesus was prophesying about an event some 37 years before it happened. This is what he said in *Luke 21*. He said: *For these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. They*

will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Well now that language, and the language in Revelation eleven is almost identical. *Revelation 11* says: *But do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.* Remember what Paul said in *Romans 11* that Israel would have its heart hardened until the time of the end when God would open their eyes and ears to the truth of the gospel of Jesus as Messiah. I mean, this is what Mitch Glaser is attesting to as he sees more and more Jews coming to the knowledge of Christ and he says it's all happening according to plan. This is how Paul stated it in *Romans 11*. He says: *I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob."*

So Jesus tells John only to measure the temple itself and he acknowledges that the outer court, that part that was already open to the Gentiles, he says that part's going to be trampled on for a lengthy period of time. And again we go to *Revelation 11:2*. It

says: *"Do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."* These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

Well, the olive trees and the lampstands, they represent truth and light and it's going to come from two chosen witnesses. And just who these witnesses are, it's literally anyone's guess. I mean, Daniel Akin's Commentary included these possibilities. He said, it's the Old Testament and New Testament, it's the witnessing church, it's witnesses in general. No, it's Elijah and Enoch, it's Elijah and Moses, it's Zerubbabel and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, James and John, Peter and Paul, the Law and the Prophets, Law and Gospel, Israel and the church, Israel and the word, the churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia and finally the spirit of Elijah and Moses. (Jesus, in Revelation (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (pp. 225-226). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.)

Could be any of them. That they are either Moses and Elijah himself or the spirit of them, that's the one that makes the most sense to me because that's what their ministry and life was, being the spirit of light and truth. And they also were the two saints

that met with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration before his crucifixion. But either way these two prophets, they're going to prophesy for three and a half months at the official beginning of the tribulation and they're going to be operating under the strict protection of God who gives them supernatural power to not only protect themselves but to afflict the earth. And so for three and a half years they're going to proclaim the gospel by prophesying to the nations, and as they do they're going to be completely protected by God from any consequences. And in addition they're going to be given the power to torment the earth and the ability to shut the sky from rain, to pollute the oceans of the earth even more, turning it into blood, to inflict the earth with all kinds of plagues. And for three and a half years they're going to have this power.

Then it says at the end of at all time we're going to be introduced to the beast himself, the Antichrist. He's going to be the one that rises up out of the pit and takes their lives. Verse 7 says: *And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them.* This really is the start of the Antichrist's reign on the earth, I mean, literally he becomes the hero. He's the hero because he slays the two prophets who've been tormenting the earth. In fact these two prophets, they were so hated that a brand new

holiday is established, a brand new Christmas. Verse 10 says: *And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.*

So the Antichrist -- and again this is not Satan, this is somebody directly empowered by Satan -- the Antichrist insists that the bodies not be given the respect of a burial and instead they're to be put on display for the edification of all who -- quote -- "dwell on the earth." And by the way, those who dwell on the earth is a technical term that doesn't just refer to earth dwellers, it refers to those who buy totally into the earthly system. You see, at this point there's going to be a mixed bag, there's going to be those who are still coming to know Christ and those who know Christ and there's going to be those who hate everything about Christ and his kingdom. Those are the folks who are known as "those who dwell on the earth." And they're going to be wildly celebrating the death of the prophets and they're going to be celebrating for three and a half days and then suddenly the breath of life returns to them and terror once more grips those who dwell on the earth.

It says the prophets, they're taken up to heaven itself and that gives way to the next trumpet judgment to be unleashed. This is verse 12. It says: *Then they heard a loud voice from heaven*

saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.

What we learned the first woe way back when was the demonic locusts of chapter 9; the second woe is this earthquake that's described by God at the end of the chapter. It says: *Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.*

Now what's very confusing here is whether or not this earthquake is the same as the one that's described five chapters later in chapter 16 or if these are two different events. I mean there's an earthquake described in chapter 16 as the final devastation and it represents the very same descriptive words as those used in chapter 11, including the heavy hail.

Let me just read to you this description in chapter 16. It says: *And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder -- again, that's just what chapter 11 said -- and a great earthquake*

such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. And great hailstones -- again like chapter 11 -- about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.

Now is this utter devastation, is this the third woe or is it simply a recapitulation in greater detail of the second woe? At this point nobody knows. What we do know is before this earthquake takes place there's yet another spontaneous outbreak of worship in heaven. This is what takes place, it says: *Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign."*

So what are we to make of these events and the two prophets who basked in God's absolute protection for three and a half years and

then are suddenly slain by this beast? Well, you know, I read an article just last week, I read an article about a young man who was on a school bus in Maryland. It said three assailants, they boarded the bus, they pointed a pistol at his head from a foot away and they fired three times and each time the gun misfired, ejecting a live bullet. One article put it this way, it said -- quote -- "In a statement the Prince George Police Department said, 'One of the suspects displayed a handgun and attempted to shoot the victim multiple times but detectives believe the weapon malfunctioned. Ammunition was recovered from the bus. The victim suffered minor injuries during the assault.'" Another authority said: "One of the three assailants, they had a gun on them, and they fired the gun three times but for some reason, by the grace of the God, the gun did not fire."

Well again, I want to compare that to just this past week when it was on I think Friday morning I learned that Tim Keller who has had a profound affect on my life and many of your lives as believers, that he had been put on hospice with very little time left after a three-year battle with pancreatic cancer. And I just wonder what do these two different folks have in common? Well, they point out that in God's economy, you are absolutely immortal until the moment you die. You see, God says that he sovereignly guards every single one of our days literally from the womb to the tomb. In *Psalm 139*,

he says: *Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.*

Just last week Steve and I went to visit our brother Leon who's also been put on hospice, and as it usually does, it brings home the point that all of us are under a death sentence. You know, the younger you are the more distant it seems; the older I get, the more inevitable it comes. That's the bad news. *Romans 5* says: *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.*

Those two prophets, they had to know they had a precise number of days to spend here on earth, and they had a huge advantage over us, I mean, they knew what to expect the moment their life on earth was ended by the beast because they'd been there already. They also knew something that we constantly forget. It's something that Jesus had to drum into the disciples by asking them: *Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.* See, the very same God who determines when a sparrow falls also determines the length of days that every one of us has.

Some thug could board a bus and point a gun at us and fire three times and every bullet's going to eject if it's not the time that God has selected for us. And by the same token, when that time comes, every effort we make to cling to life will come to naught.

Now, a godly man like Tim Keller will accept God's will even though every one of us still cling to life. Quote -- "I'm thankful for my family, that loves me. I'm thankful for the time God has given me, but I'm ready to see Jesus," he prayed, according to the family update. "I can't wait to see Jesus. Send me home." You know, I was writing this on Friday morning, and by Friday afternoon heard that he had gone to be with the Lord. His son Michael said -- quote -- "God waited until he was alone with Mom. She kissed him on the forehead and he breathed out his last breath. We take comfort in some of his last words. 'There's no downside for me leaving. Not in the slightest,' the statement read."

You see, it's Jesus, Jesus who bought that comfort for us. See, the book of Revelation, it details this cosmic battle between the kingdoms as it unfolds; but you know every one of us is going to have our own little battle, our own little dance with death because it's something we're all born with. And you know, many of us have loved ones who want no part of Jesus whatsoever. Many of us have those who count themselves among "those who dwell on the earth. "

I've seen it over and over again, they enter eternity just like they do here on Revelation. They enter eternity shaking their fists at God. I'll say it again, I mean, we who know Christ, we have no idea what a blessing we've been given.

As chapter 11 draws to an end, it says: *The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.* See the elders, they fall on their face speaking of Jesus like we would speak of some superhero who literally saved the earth from evildoers because that's just what he did. He embraced death itself on our behalf. He took the sin of the world onto himself as our perfect sacrifice so that we by faith could stand spotless before a holy God clad not with our righteousness but with Christ's that was given to us by faith. So we can have the very same confidence that those two prophets had because we have the very same God and the very same gift of salvation that they once received.

You know, I can't help but think of the 23rd Psalm. It says: *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.* And the promise that we receive here is not a promise

to get us around death, rather it's a promise to be walked through death with God at our side, and that makes all the difference in the world for Tim Keller, for Leon, and for all of us. Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for who you are, I thank you that death truly has lost its sting. It stings, there's no question, the loss of Tim Keller is a sting for all of us. But Lord, as he said, there is no downside to this, none at all if you know Christ, if you are saved by grace; and I just thank you and praise you for that gift. And I praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.