

Good morning, church family. Take your Bibles, please, and turn to Mark chapter 13. Mark chapter 13. Thank you to Devin again for preaching last Sunday as he wrapped up chapter 12. Mark chapter 13. We're beginning a new chapter this week. We're going to be in the first 13 verses. So Mark 13, 1 through 13. So turn there with me, please. And then once you've found it, stand with me in honor of the one who gives us this word. as we read it together this morning. Mark 13, verses 1-13. It reads, And as he was going out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings. And Jesus said to him, Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down. And as he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning him privately. Tell us, when will these things be and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled? And Jesus began to say to them, See to it that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, saying, I am he, and will mislead many. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places. There will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pains. But see to yourselves, for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be beaten in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake as a witness to them. And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all the nations. And when they lead you away, delivering you up, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit. A brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. And you'll be hated by all because of my name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. This is the Word of the Lord. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we are so thankful for your Word. We're so thankful for the grace that has brought us together here as a body, that we can, as a body, worship you. I pray that it is in spirit and in truth, and with a heart that seeks to bring you glory. We pray, Lord, that you would give us an extra measure of your grace so we might understand a difficult text today and over the coming weeks, that we would seek to honor you with the right interpretation, and that we would understand how these truths impact us today. I pray, Lord, that you'd remove any distractions, any heaviness on my mind and my heart, that you would use me simply as a mouthpiece to teach your body. We love you and praise you and ask for all this. For your namesake and for your glory in your holy name I pray. Amen. Alright, you can be seated. Alright, so Mark chapter 13. Some of you may have been waiting in eager anticipation. I have not been waiting in eager anticipation for Mark chapter 13. Mark chapter 13 is known among theologians to be one of the hardest chapters in the entire New Testament to interpret. And so I've had my work cut out for me the last couple weeks and will over

the next couple of weeks as we get through Mark chapter 13. It will be in a three-part series, mini-series within our Mark series, Future Hope. And today we're talking about Future Hope part one. So the title of the message today is Future Hope part one. And anytime we begin to get into a particular chapter about things that deal with end times and those kinds of things, there's a lot of debate and a lot of things going on. And my goal is to interpret Mark chapter 13 as My goal is with every text, in the context of where it's presented, what it's saying, and not add a lot of extra things to it. So I want you to understand that's my goal as we go through this, is to interpret the text as it reads. And my prayer is that by God's grace and through His Spirit, we can see that together. So Mark chapter 13 is going to be essentially closing out Jesus' rejection of the temple and pointing us to the future. That's what the entire chapter is about. We see about four verses of some dialogue, and then from verse 5 on to the end of the chapter, or verse 6, excuse me, on the end of the chapter, we will see nothing but teaching from Jesus. It is verse 5. So we'll see teaching from Jesus from verse 5 on to the end of the chapter. So we're going to see some of Mark's gospel specifically, the longest continuous teaching of Jesus in the entire gospel. So this is the longest time that Jesus sits down and teaches them directly. And it's very important to remember that this is at the close of chapter 11 and 12. So we made progression beginning of chapter 11 when Jesus gave the story of the fig tree, if you recall, how the fig tree was wilted from the roots up and it was a premonition of the destruction of the temple and the rejection of the mess that the Sanhedrin had made of the temple, and then he went through day after day or occasion after occasion of meeting with and disagreeing with and being challenged by the leaders of the temple, even cleaning out or stopping some of the sacrificial system as he went into the synagogue one day. And so we've seen all this over the last two chapters, and now as we get to chapter 13, this is essentially summarizing and closing out that rejection of the temple. This is also considered the final discourse of Jesus and his disciples, because in chapter 14, Jesus's passion begins. So this is ultimately wrapping up Jesus's ministry with his disciples. I mean, it's a very, very important text. So I want us to really understand the importance of what Jesus is saying, because often we can get caught up in almost similar things to what the disciples were looking for. But Jesus's point in this chapter is about hope. and looking to him and being vigilant, not about specifically what's going on in the future. So when we think about the way this chapter is laid out, we're gonna see a couple different things. We're gonna see first the term these things, and then we're gonna see the term in those days. Those are two different terms, but I wanna give them to you now as we go through the next three weeks, because those terms will be very important to understand the interpretation of this text and what he's talking about. Another very important phrase I would like for you to, if you're a note-taker, write this down, keep it in the back of your mind as we talk through everything over the next three weeks, is the

term, already, not yet. Already, not yet. Because it's very important for us to understand that the kingdom of God is already at hand, but not fully culminated. So we have to understand from an end times perspective that the kingdom is here, but it's not fully here. So it's already here, but it's not yet. And so those are a couple phrases I would like for you to keep in your mind. This chapter has a purposeful mystery to it. Jesus is going to quote a lot from the Old Testament. He's going to use those quotes to give us 19 different imperatives in this chapter. 19 different instructions or commands for us, and every one of them is about staying vigilant, trusting the hope that is found in Him. And so the overarching message of chapter 13 is not about us figuring out the end times or figuring out when Christ is going to come back, because it's very clear in this chapter, as we'll see in part three, that Jesus tells us, no one knows, only God does. And so the point of this chapter is not about us figuring it out. The point of the chapter is to follow the commands of Christ and living in the now and being vigilant. So I want us to understand those concepts as we dig in here, because this is going to be an overarching three-week message, all pointing to the same idea. So with that little bit longer introduction, let's dig into the text today. Point number one is destruction foretold. Destruction foretold, verses one through four. Let me reread those verses here. And as he was going out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, teacher behold, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings. And Jesus said to him, do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another, which will not be torn down. And as he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning him privately. Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all of these things are going to be fulfilled? So as I mentioned a moment ago, we're wrapping up Jesus's time in the temple. And we begin here with verse one of chapter 13, that he was going out of the temple. And I want us to understand this not just from a physical standpoint, based on the overall message of Mark, this is the last time Jesus will be in the temple. He is wrapping up his final rejection and condemnation of the temple practices. So think of it symbolically as well, he is leaving the temple and he will never return to the temple again. And as they're leaving, of course, we've talked about the grandeur of the temple, it's just massive size, and we'll go over a few specifics of that here in just a moment, but just the magnitude of it. One of the disciples, we don't know which one specifically, but one of the disciples says, do you see these great buildings? Now some think that this is Judas asking this question because Mark omits Judas' name in the Lord's Supper in chapter 14. It could be, based on Judas always looking at the material things and being the one who stole from the purse and those kinds of things. There's no way for us to know for sure, that's complete speculation. But we don't know specifically who Mark says it is. It could be Judas. But he sees these enormous stones and he begins to comment on them. Teacher behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful

buildings. Now in our modern day... architecture. I don't think I've ever walked into a building and looked at cinder blocks and went, what marvelous stones these are. So for us, it's kind of hard for us to comprehend the magnitude of what's going on here. Josephus, a first century historian, in the time of Jesus, wrote about the building of the temple. And on the time that Mark was written, when Jesus would have walked through the temple, it had been being built by Herod for 50 years and still had not been completed. And to understand the magnitude of the work that they were doing, Josephus records that some of the stones were some 60 feet long for the wall around the temple. 60 foot long granite stones. Or marble stones, depending on what they were using for the particular portion of the temple. There's been one that's been uncovered by modern archaeology, and it's physically, you can see it today, they've measured it. One that they found was 42 feet long, 11 feet high, 14 feet deep, and weighs over 1 million pounds. That's one stone. So understanding the magnitude of the temple is very important to understand what Jesus is saying here in just a moment. This was a magnificent undertaking. 50 years they've been building on it and it's still not done. Now you can imagine with the technology they had in those days, moving a million pound stone would not be easy. You can imagine the amount of time it takes to move those kinds of things. But just the sheer magnitude of this building is almost unimaginable. And so as they're leaving, this disciple that we don't know who it is, says, look at how amazing these buildings are. And Jesus gives the most counterintuitive message or reply to that comment. Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another, which will not be torn down. Instead of acknowledging the magnitude of it, he simply says, these great buildings, nothing's going to be left of them. Not one stone, okay, imagine we just talked about a million pound stone. Not one of them will be left upon another. So understanding the magnitude of each of these individual stones kind of helps you think about that phrase a little differently, right? When we think about knocking down a cinder block wall, it's not as hard to think about making sure no stone was on top of another, but we are talking about stones of incredible magnitude. And so Jesus says, not one of these stones will be left upon another. This is symbolic of this great building, the symbol of national Israel. The temple ultimately is the symbol of national Israel. This is the nationality of, they get to point to this. We are children of Abraham. We have God, here's our temple. This is who we are. They identified themselves with the temple. Understand that. And so now that we've seen him identify what's going to happen, they leave the temple, and then they go to the Mount of Olives. We've talked about the Mount of Olives a few different times, but as a reminder, this is on the east side of the city, which also happens to be where the temple is. The temple is on the east side. The Kidron Valley is in between there, and so you rise some 300 feet above the city. So they've left and they're back on the Mount of Olives where all this began. So you remember, Jesus talked about the fig tree and the

destruction of the temple in the beginning of chapter 11. You remember that? He used symbology. We understood he was talking about the ultimate destruction of the temple and he is done with symbology. He's done. He's just saying it outright. This temple is done and it will be destroyed. And now they're back on the Mount of Olives. So do you see the tie-in between the beginning of chapter 11 and all of chapter 13? Interpretation is understanding three things. Three major things, context, context, and context. So the context of what we're talking about here is the destruction of the temple tying into his ultimate rejection, showing his authority over both the Sanhedrin and the temple that we've seen over the last two chapters. So all of this ties together. We have to understand what he is going to say now in light of what he's been doing in the temple. And so now that they're back on the Mount of Olives, where they're at, most likely they can actually see the entrance to the synagogue itself. Not just the temple overall, but because it's 300 feet, the Mishnah itself records, if you're sitting on the Mount of Olives, you can see the actual entrance to the synagogue, the actual, not synagogue, excuse me, the actual sanctuary, the sanctuary itself, where you would enter in and worship God, where only Jews were allowed to go, even priests. And so from where they're sitting, the disciples come up, four of them, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, come up to question Him privately. I would say if I were in that age, I would probably have some questions too, if I was just told that this magnificent building of 50 years, not completed yet, was going to be destroyed one brick at a time, till none of them are stacked on top of each other. And so they come to him and say, tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all of these things are going to be fulfilled? Now, when we think about this question, where they are, the judgment that Jesus just pronounced, I want you to remember, we're not going to turn there and read it, but I want you to remember, as we talked about the beginning of chapter 11, Zechariah 14, one through eight. Zechariah 14 is a prophecy about God's judgment upon Jerusalem. So God said he would stand on the Mount of Olives and pronounce judgment on Jerusalem. So Jesus is very quietly, but specifically placing himself in the position as God. So he goes back to the Mount of Olives, Just as Zechariah 14, 1-8 says, that God stood on the Mount of Olives and pronounced judgment, so He's placing Himself in this seat, and yet the disciples come to ask for a sign. I mean, when we think about the demolition of the temple that will eventually happen, we know it is in past now, but that will eventually happen in context of the disciples in the future. Josephus wrote that Caesar ordered the whole city and the temple to be raised to the ground. All the rest of the wall encompassing the city was so completely leveled to the ground as to leave future visitors to the spot no ground for believing that it had ever been inhabited. Those are the specific instructions of Caesar. I want you to make it look like it's never been used, never been built upon. And Jesus is sitting in a seat to identify himself with God from a previous prophecy as the one who has the authority to stop the temple

practices. Yet the disciples ask for a sign. Now why would they ask for a sign? Why are their minds so inquisitive? Well, there's some words here that they're bringing up that we want to pay close attention to. I made allusion to them a moment ago in the introduction, but in verse 4, they say, tell us when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled. So these things and all these things you'll see repeated throughout chapter 13 over the next three weeks. as Jesus answers specifically, but I want to draw your attention to the word fulfilled. In the Greek, that word is a verb, and it is scintillane. And that word scintillane is an eschatological word. It's used specifically throughout Jewish history and in Greek-Jewish writings to reference the end of all things, the end times. And so they are specifically asking him, what about these signs? Is this the end? Are these going to be fulfilled? When is this going to happen? They want a sign. Now, I want to draw our attention because if you remember in Mark, we've seen an occasion when someone came and asked Jesus for a sign. Do you happen to remember maybe where that was? I can refresh your memory if you don't. Mark chapter eight. So in Mark 8, verses 11 and 12, the Pharisees come to Jesus and they begin asking Him for a sign. In fact, it reads, and the Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. And sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, why does this generation seek a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation. So we already know Jesus' feelings about signs, don't we? We already know He sighs deeply. In fact, the interpretation of Mark 8, 11, and 12 has this connotation where if you have to ask for a sign, you have a lack of faith. That those who have a lack of faith ask for a sign. And yet these disciples are coming to ask for a sign. And what Jesus does, as we're gonna see going into point two here in just a moment, but we're gonna see that he answers it, but he answers it with warnings about asking for a sign. Don't look for the signs, don't watch for the signs, be vigilant. It's not about the signs. I'm gonna give you some indications, ultimately, is what he's going to do. I'm gonna give you some things that you can see, but the point is not the signs, the point is me. The point is the hope in me. The point is the spirit will be the one that takes you through these signs. The point is, I will help you endure as we will see at the end of our text today. So here we have the setting of what's going to happen, the destruction foretold. And as I'm thinking through here, the overarching application of verses one through 13 is Christ and hoping in Him. And we'll talk more about that in a moment. But there's some other applications that I think we must be mindful of. Because ultimately, Jesus is rejecting the national symbol of Israel. He's rejecting the nationalism that has become the pride of the nation of Israel. And it made me think, it truly made me think, how much of our nationalism would stand up to the scrutiny of Jesus? How much of our nationalism would stand up to the scrutiny of Christ? You don't have to answer that. But our lives indicators that our hope is in Christ, or our lives indications that our hope is in our nationality. It's

something to consider, for ultimately the Jews trusted their heritage of being the children of Abraham more than they trusted God himself. They trusted the structure of their temple and what was there and what they were supposed to do for themselves instead of God himself and the very Messiah in front of them as he presented himself in that very temple. And so we must ask ourselves, where does our hope stand? Do we spend more time looking for signs or looking to Christ? Where do we spend our time? Where is our hope? So I hope that those questions will be something that you can mull over over the rest of this Lord's Day. Number two. So we've looked at destruction foretold. And we've seen the question and the little bit of dialogue between the disciples and Jesus. And now we're entering a portion of chapter 13 that begins the longest section of Jesus' teaching in the entire chapter. So we're gonna reread verses five through 13 so that we can refresh our memories for a moment. And Jesus began to say to them in verse five, see to it that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name saying, I am he, and will mislead many. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places. There will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pains. But see to yourselves, for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be beaten in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake as a witness to them. And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all the nations. And when they lead you away, delivering you up, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit. and brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. And you will be hated by all because of my name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved." So now that the opening dialogue is here and the question has been placed by those four disciples, Jesus is beginning to respond. And he's going to ask their question, but first he takes the opportunity to teach them. And what he is going to teach them is that it's not about the signs. They're asking for a sign, but it's not about the signs. It's about the gospel. It's about his message being carried out. It's about their dependence on the Holy Spirit. It's about those who will endure to the end, those who will be saved. He has to teach them first about the futility of focusing on signs. Because focusing on the signs only leads to the wrong end. When you focus on signs and you're so caught up in the signs, you're missing what the signs are pointing to. And so the mystery is going to be carried throughout. So let's try to look at this in the way that Jesus intended the disciples to see it, which is a call for hope, a call for us to understand who it is that we serve, that we are to live for the now and be focused on enduring. And so when we think about going through this, beginning in verse five, he says, see to it that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name saying, I am, and will mislead many. I left off the he, your

translation of verse six may have a he, where it says, I am he, the he is added for our English understanding. But in the original language, that is the phrase, ego me, which is I am, which is the same word that God used in the burning bush when he introduced himself to Moses. It's the same phrase that Christ has used over and over again in Mark to identify himself as the one true God. In other words, what he's saying is the first line of defense for the disciples comes from within, the house of faith. The first thing that they have to watch out for are those who are in the faith who attempt to take their eyes off of the true Christ. Even those who would claim to be God Himself. And he says, see to it. Take care, as some translations may say it in verse 5. Take care that no one deceives you, because there will be people claiming to be me, and will mislead many. There's a lot there that I could unpack and we'll unpack a little bit of application later, but I want us to understand that still happens today. There's going to be a lot of things that we're going to read through these first 13 verses, especially that is still occurring today. And the interesting thing about it is nearly everything, nearly every point of prophecy that Jesus gives in these first 13 verses is fulfilled already in Acts. Nearly every single one. They talk about the man that claimed to be Jesus and led some 400 astray. and yet they killed off the leader and the 400 disbanded. I don't know if you remember what I'm talking about towards the end of Acts. There's going to be multiple other things that we're gonna read through here about wars and being dragged before courts and mothers and fathers betraying children and vice versa. All these things have already been fulfilled in Acts, but is it safe to say that all of that is still continuing today? Absolutely. Absolutely, so there's a concept I want us to understand already, not yet. The kingdom of God is already in place, it's just not fully culminated and the church has been raised up to live in the end times. Guess what? We're in the end times. The church has always been in the end times since the moment it was raised up in Acts and Christ is clearly teaching that right here. The end times is not some special, Futuristic, it's not gonna actually get bad until this particular, no, we've been in the end times the entire time. The church always has been. Has there been wars and rumors of wars throughout the history of the church? Absolutely. Have there been earthquakes and natural phenomena throughout the time of the church? Absolutely. Has there been persecution from both in the church and without the church and even inside the family unit? Yes, absolutely. Throughout church history there has been. So I want us to understand this concept of already, not yet. The end times is here, it's just not yet culminated. So I wanna ingrain that thought in your mind, because that's gonna be very important when we get to week two and week three of this series. So as he continues on, he says, when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, in verse seven, do not be alarmed. Those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. He says, yeah, there's gonna be wars, but don't worry about it. Why would he say not to worry about it? Don't be alarmed, don't worry about it, because



he's still in control. Who has the authority? He just spent the last two chapters saying who has the authority. Now who did he point to himself? Who did he point to every single time? Himself. He just spent the last two chapters telling us he is the one who is God and has authority. So when there's wars, we don't worry about them. We don't be alarmed. But that's not even yet the end. But he says in verse eight and goes into more detail, for nation will rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There'll be earthquakes in various places. There will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pains. Were there famines recorded in the days of the early church? Absolutely, Paul records them as different churches helping out different churches in times of famine. And so he's continuing to give elaboration on the things that are to come. Ultimately, what he's saying is, it's going to be rough for those who are part of the way. We're going to see that more as we go through here. But these things are going to happen. He is telling us what is going to happen. There's going to be some signs. And he continues to use the phrase, these things. Verse 8, he says, these things are merely the beginning of birth pains. So there's this tie back to the question of the disciples and the destruction of the temple. The destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 is a paradigm of sorts of what's going to happen at the very last of days. So as God does throughout the Old Testament in showing us signs and shadows of Christ's coming, He does the same with the end times. He's showing us what will happen in the establishment of the church, we see it fulfilled in Acts, and then we see in A.D. 70 the destruction of the temple as a sign, as a paradigm looking forward to when Christ comes again. And that will be important next week. As you can see, these all kind of tie together. And so I know I may be giving a lot of information, but be mindful of these small phrases that I'm giving because it helps us interpret the very difficult passage together. And so as he continues on, but see to yourselves in verse 9, But see to yourselves, the original language is more directly translated, you must be clear in your own mind. You must be clear in your own mind. And the emphasis in the Greek is easier to give than in English. The emphasis is entirely on you, the word you. You must be clear in your own minds. Or as some translations may say, see to yourselves. For they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be beaten in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake as a witness to them. So with him starting this teaching about the persecution, because now he's shifting gears, he's talking about turmoil outwardly, even some coming from inside the house of faith, now he's moving into persecution itself. And he says in verse nine, see to yourselves, they will deliver you to the courts, So they're going to deliver you to civil government. We see that, of course, beginning to be fulfilled in Acts, but we see that throughout church history. Over and over and over again, the church has been delivered to the courts or the kings or the princes for judgment upon those who follow Christ. But the point he said about being clear in your own minds brings the emphasis back to Christ. bringing the emphasis back

to who he is. Be clear in your own minds who I am. That's what he's saying. You must be clear about me. Because if you claim me, they're going to take you before the courts. Then it says they're also going to take you before the synagogues and beat you. So now we see persecution coming from civil government. We see persecution coming from the established religious authorities. Skewed established religious authorities, by the way. who were going to beat and persecute the church. And then he sums up again, civil government being the primary one, as he elaborates on kings and governors. But at the end of verse 9, he gives the purpose for it all. As a witness to them. As a witness to them. In other words, a key factor of Christ initiating and culminating his kingdom, because in verse 10, it says the gospel must be first proclaimed to all the nations, a key part of that is using the church to be witnesses for him despite the turmoil, despite everything caving down around them, despite wars and rumors of wars. Ultimately, where does the believer's hope lie? In Christ, can you make it through everything that Christ has already said here? And it gets worse. I would say betrayal by the family unit is even worse. So if you can get through all of this, you can't do that by yourself. It is only through Christ that you can endure to the end. And again, we'll talk about that more in a moment. But the point of it is to be the mouthpiece of God used for his glory. This is not about figuring out when he's coming back. Do you see him consistently pointing them towards himself? Yes, these bad things will happen, but you have me. Ultimately, he wants them to live in a constant vigilant state in the now focused on him, not focused upon everything else, not focused on the signs, not focused on the future. It is about the hope found in him and him alone. And if you go into this passage, into this entire chapter, wanting to figure out when Christ is coming back, you miss the intent of what Christ was saying. It's not about the signs, it's about me. And so we have a hope-filled promise in verse 10, the gospel must first be proclaimed to all the nations. What a beautiful hope that is. Now you may be asking, why is that a beautiful hope? Because Christ promises unequivocally that he will not fail to save every one of his elect children. Every one that he has chosen before the foundations of the earth will be saved, and he will accomplish that by ensuring that every nation on the earth will hear the gospel. And I want to tell you a false way of looking at this because I've had this conversation with many people before. There are some that look at that as a challenge. We can help bring about Christ coming back faster. Let's go make sure that we strategically give the gospel to every single nation. Now, should we avoid giving the gospel of certain nations? No, that's not my argument. But my argument is, if you approach this as a, let's pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and make sure Christ comes back when we can figure it out. I mean, I've seen the strategic plans of some missionary organizations that literally say, we want to make the goal of bringing Christ back by such and such a day. Let's go to this nation by this time, and this nation by this time, and this nation by this time. How many nations have come and gone throughout human

history? A lot. There are a lot of nations that simply don't exist anymore. Can we all agree with that? This is not about us figuring it out. This is about Christ's promise that his people will be his. End of story. The elect are his, and he will ensure they hear the message exactly when they're intended to, to bring about his sovereign plan. So let's look at the hope, not at the sign. And then he goes on to give them even further trials and tribulations and persecutions, but he's gonna give them a hope as well. In verse 11, and when they lead you away, delivering you up, Think about the betrayal that that entails. Do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit. Listen to what he's saying here. He is wanting them to not fixate on the signs to the extent that they aren't even supposed to prepare for being in front of the kings. Their trust should be so absolute in Him, so unfailingly focused on Him, that they don't worry about the signs that they're looking for, that they've asked questions about. They're just simply to trust that they will know what to say because the Spirit will use them as the mouthpiece to accomplish God's sovereign plan. Think about that in application to us. We cannot get so fixated on preparing. Eschatology in America is probably one of the most hotly selling theological topics, right? There's books, preparation kits for all the things. We shouldn't be focused on the signs. We should be focused on the gospel. We should be focused on Christ. That's what he's telling us to do. The imperatives are about him, not about what we're preparing to go through. And what a beautiful promise it is that the Holy Spirit will be the one who gives us what we will simply be, for lack of a better term, a tape playing out what he wants us to say. Couldn't think of a better analogy there, I tried really hard. We will simply be the mouthpiece of the words that he has promised to give us. Now this does not mean, I always like to correct some common misconceptions that I've heard about specific verses when we come to them, I've heard this verse used for, don't worry about studying for the test, the Holy Spirit will give you the words that you need in that hour. Or don't worry about not speeding, because the Holy Spirit will give you the words you need to get out of the ticket in the hour. That's not what this is saying. Okay, I wanna make sure we're not applying this incorrectly. This is not a blanket for the Holy Spirit giving you the words you need in every hour and every situation. This is about persecution. What's the key word for interpretation? Context. The context is not about what troubles you may have gotten yourself into. This is about troubles that have followed you because you are a follower of Christ, i.e. persecution. So the promise here is that the Holy Spirit will not leave you to yourself when that time comes. But then he goes on to take it even a step further in verse 12. And brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. Man. Now the family unit is getting involved. So he's looked at the house of faith, he's looked at the world around us, now he's bringing it down to the family unit. Even the family

unit will fall apart because of me. That is very hard to think of. But I want us to remember the context of the original readers of this letter. By the time that the original readers of this letter would have received it in Rome, which is the intended audience for it, the persecution of Nero was raging. This exact concept of families betraying different family members was known throughout. It was written down by Roman historians, it was written down by secular historians, it was written down by Jewish historians, it was very common for Christians to be betrayed by their family members. In other words, Rome would get some Christians, they would get a particular church, and then to save their selves from having to go to the lions, or to be dipped in tar and raised on a stake and burned alive for lighting for the Roman soldiers in Nero and his garden, to avoid that kind of persecution and pain, they would then turn over their families. And so ultimately Nero persecuted the Christians so successfully by getting people to turn over those whom they loved. And so this very thing has occurred in the history of the church and already been fulfilled. And what a tragic thing it is. But notice in verse 13, as the thought continues, and you will be hated by all because of my name. This is all for the sake of Christ. This is all for those who follow the way. That was the common way of describing Christians in this time. Those who follow the way, the way of Christ because of him. This is all for his sake. And then he adds on a phrase at the very end, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. Now when you first read this, you may think, okay, so I just have to pull myself up by my bootstraps, I have to make sure I'm ready to go before persecution, I have to be ready for all these things to make sure I get through because I want to be saved. I wanted to speak to you for a moment here about a very important doctrine called perseverance of the saints. The doctrine of perseverance of the saints is not about you persevering because can you persevere through those kinds of things by your own works? No, of course not. Perseverance of the saints is about God through Christ and the work of His Spirit making you and helping you and carrying you through persevering till the time of either your death which is an abundant joy for the believer, is it not? Or the second coming of Christ. He will persevere you till the end. Perseverance of the saints is not about your own perseverance, it's about Christ carrying you through. And to give you this hope, This is the crux of the message this morning. This is the culmination, the crescendo. To give you this hope, I wanna share with you multiple passage from Scripture that says that Christ and God does not fail His people. Because it is not up to you to endure to the end, Christ will ensure that those who are His endure to the end. Turn with me if you will first to 2 Thessalonians 3 in verse 3. We're going to go through several passages here. We're going to begin in 2 Thessalonians 3 in verse 3. In 2 Thessalonians, Paul writes to the Thessalonian church, But the Lord is faithful, who will strengthen and guard you from the evil one. Do those things that Christ prophesied sound pretty evil? But the Lord is faithful who will strengthen and guard you from the evil

one. Hebrews 1. It reads, in reference to Christ, who is the radiance of his glory and the exact representation of his nature, and upholds all things, all things, that's all-encompassing, there's nothing left out, all things by the power of his word, who have accomplished, excuse me, who having accomplished cleansing for sin, sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. That means the very one who is promising All these things to happen is the very one who upholds all things by the word of his power and is sitting at this moment, having accomplished his redemptive plan at the right hand of the majesty on high. Think of the power behind the one who holds us up. While you're there in Hebrews, turn over to chapter 13, verses five and six. Hebrews 13, five and six and verse eight. It reads, make sure that your way of life is free from the love of money, being content with what you have. For he himself has said, I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you. So that we can confidently say, the Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. What will man do to me? Verse eight, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. There is nothing that changes. our Savior. Philippians chapter 4 and verse 13, you may not even have to turn there. Philippians 4.13, one of the most popularly misused verses in American evangelicalism. But our most important interpretive practice is what? Context. So this verse says, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. What an amazingly beautiful promise that is. And when it's misimplied, it's cheapened. Because Paul is talking about his persecutions. Already Paul is experiencing the very things that Christ is talking about in our Mark passage. This verse can be applied only to making it through and enduring to the end through the strength of Christ, the persecutions that are sure to come. So our hope is in Christ. Finally, Romans 8, turn there with me if you will. My goal here is to help us not make the same mistakes that the disciples did, not to fixate on the signs, but to fixate on Christ. Romans 8, verses 31 through 39. I hope that this is a familiar passage for you. Romans 8, verses 31 through 39 reads, What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who indeed did not spare his own son, but delivered him over for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies, who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is he who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction, or turmoil, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, for your sake we are being put to death all day long. We were counted as sheep for the slaughter. But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creative thing will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The point is, we do not endure, Christ carries us there. Our hope is not in the signs. Our hope is not in the preparation for the signs. Our hope is in Christ.

And so looking back at Mark chapter 13, if you need to turn back there, I want you to end this talk about the future and about these things that the disciples are asking about, all of which will be culminated some sort of a way around the destruction of the temple. We'll kind of initiate that. We'll talk more about that over the coming weeks. But everything that we've seen, the horrifying evil things that we've seen that will come upon those who follow Christ are not to be our concern. They're not to be our concern. Our concern is the here and now. Our concern is our relationship with Christ. Our concern is our hope. In fact, persecution is one of the most purifying elements for the church, because it shows those who are truly His. Because as we've just discussed with the phrase, but the one who endures to the end will be saved, it is not us who choose to endure who can endure by our own works, it is Christ who helps them endure. So those who endure those types of persecutions are truly His. Those who do not are not truly His. Because Christ doesn't fail, amen? So if he doesn't fail to withhold those who are, to hold up those who are his, to help those who are his to persevere, then those who do not, who walk away from the faith when persecution begins, those were not truly his. This is the sign of an authentic gospel that is being preached. When persecution occurs, the truth of Christ is present. So ultimately, overall, Jesus is beginning to answer their questions. He's beginning to answer the question about these things. But he first tells them not to focus on those things. Our hope is in Christ. And our hope today is in Christ. We are in the end times and have been, the church has been for over 2,000 years. In fact, many of the things that we've seen today, as I mentioned before, were fulfilled in Acts. It's really, really interesting to go through and read and compare all the things that Jesus says in these first 13 verses, and how many of them are fulfilled even in the book of Acts. So Jesus ultimately comes and inaugurates the eschaton. That's a fancy way of saying He starts the end times. So I want you to think about this with an analogy that may help. If you walk very closely to a mountain range, those from Colorado can probably help me. When you walk close to a mountain range, you're overwhelmed with the size of a specific mountain, right? This mountain is huge. But if you look at a mountain range from a long ways back, you understand that that particular mountain is just part of the mountain range, and you see it as one big range, right? God sees the incarnation to the second coming of Christ as the new covenant of grace, one covenant, one big mountain range, if you will, with individual peaks. So he's seeing it as one large thing. In other words, Christ inaugurated the redemptive plan, the initiation of the kingdom of God, and will not be finished until he comes again. We are just simply living in the mountain range, if you will. And so there's some points of application I want us to have from this today, because it's important for us to understand how this impacts us today, especially in the church culture that we're in, where the end time seems to be such a focus. The disciples wanted to know the future, as many believers do as well. Humanity as a whole has always wanted to know the future.

There's always been people giving fortunes all throughout human history. There's just people that seek that kind of thing. But Jesus' primary point of teaching in this opening section of the chapter is to call them to watch out so that they would not be deceived. He calls them back to the present, not to the signs. These things, that he told them about, they weren't even to prepare for. They weren't to prepare to stand before the kings. The wars, the natural disasters, the unrest, Jesus didn't tell them these things so that they could cower in a corner waiting for things to get worse, hoping for the end. He told them over and over and over again, watch out, be ready, be vigilant. And he'll use those phrases more frequently as we go through the chapter. The point is we are to live in the moment, looking to Christ. Our hope is in his second coming. When things get hard, you hope for his second coming. One of the reasons why we take the Lord's Supper every single week is so that we can refocus on the hope that is found in Christ. But we don't look to the signs, we look to the hope. And so we have to understand our loyalty to Christ must take precedence over everything, even family. Because our families ultimately, as Christ said, could betray us. Our hope is in Him. He is our everything. The overarching message of Christ's teaching in these first 13 verses is Himself. and the work of His Spirit in His people, because He will make sure those who are His endures to the end, and they will be saved by His work in them. That's our application. Stay focused on Christ. Our future hope is Him. So in conclusion, over the next two weeks, we're gonna continue to discuss things of this nature in times type things, prophecy from the Old Testament, how it fits into what Jesus is saying. We're gonna even be looking at possibly some things and acts that were fulfilled to help us better understand. But we have to understand when we're going through this chapter, the already not yet of the end times, we are here, we're in them. The church has been since its inception. We're not waiting for anything else other than him to come back and take his elect home. I'd like to leave you with this quote that I thought pertinent to wrap up these first 13 verses. The life of faith is not an exemption from adversity but a reliance on the promise of God to bear witness to the gospel of adversity and to be saved for eternal life through it. It being the gospel. The life of faith is not an exemption from adversity, but a reliance on the promise of God to bear witness to the gospel in adversity and to be saved for eternal life through it. Our hope is in Christ and Christ alone. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we are so thankful for this text that could, my prayer is that could recalibrate us on hoping in you. on understanding where we are in the now, and being vigilant on watching out, watching for those who would deceive, watching for the culture and governments around us who persecute those who love you, the hatred of the world for those who follow the way, even the family unit that may fall apart due to faith in you, and understanding that through all that adversity, Lord, you are our hope. We rest in you, we rest in the accomplished work that you did for us, and we worship you on the throne of majesty where you currently sit, interceding for us

at this very moment. We thank you for your grace and praise you for you are worthy of praise. Help us to embed these truths in our hearts and minds going forward. In your holy name I pray, amen.