

“The End and a New Beginning – Part 1” | Isaiah 65
Trinity Presbyterian Church | Reverend Steve Johnson

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Please turn in your Bibles to Isaiah 65 (page 623). We have now reached the climactic ending of the book of Isaiah, the final two chapters which form one cohesive ending, and this ending reveals a new beginning. These final chapters answer the unresolved question from last week’s text, from Isaiah 64 – will God afflict his people forever? The answer is a resounding *No!* No, God will *not* afflict his people forever, but bring them into everlasting comfort, joy, and prosperity. And while this answer is 100% true, God’s going to make a massively important clarification here about who his people actually are, because it isn’t as simple as saying “God’s people are Israel, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” So who are God’s people and what is this new beginning that God has for them? Please read along with me the grand finale of Isaiah.

Isaiah 65 (ESV)

**I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me;
I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me.
I said, “Here I am, here I am,”
to a nation that was not called by my name.**

**2 I spread out my hands all the day
to a rebellious people,
who walk in a way that is not good,
following their own devices;**

**3 a people who provoke me
to my face continually,
sacrificing in gardens
and making offerings on bricks;**

**4 who sit in tombs,
and spend the night in secret places;
who eat pig’s flesh,
and broth of tainted meat is in their vessels;**

**5 who say, “Keep to yourself,
do not come near me, for I am too holy for you.”
These are a smoke in my nostrils,
a fire that burns all the day.**

**6 Behold, it is written before me:
“I will not keep silent, but I will repay;
I will indeed repay into their lap**

**7 both your iniquities and your fathers’ iniquities together,
says the LORD;**

because they made offerings on the mountains
and insulted me on the hills,
I will measure into their lap
payment for their former deeds.”

8 Thus says the LORD:

“As the new wine is found in the cluster,
and they say, ‘Do not destroy it,
for there is a blessing in it,’
so I will do for my servants’ sake,
and not destroy them all.

9 I will bring forth offspring from Jacob,
and from Judah possessors of my mountains;
my chosen shall possess it,
and my servants shall dwell there.

10 Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks,
and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down,
for my people who have sought me.

11 But you who forsake the LORD,
who forget my holy mountain,
who set a table for Fortune
and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny,

12 I will destine you to the sword,
and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter,
because, when I called, you did not answer;
when I spoke, you did not listen,
but you did what was evil in my eyes
and chose what I did not delight in.”

13 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

“Behold, my servants shall eat,
but you shall be hungry;
behold, my servants shall drink,
but you shall be thirsty;
behold, my servants shall rejoice,
but you shall be put to shame;

14 behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart,
but you shall cry out for pain of heart
and shall wail for breaking of spirit.

15 You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse,
and the Lord GOD will put you to death,
but his servants he will call by another name,

16 so that he who blesses himself in the land
shall bless himself by the God of truth,
and he who takes an oath in the land
shall swear by the God of truth;

because the former troubles are forgotten
 and are hidden from my eyes.
 17 "For behold, I create new heavens
 and a new earth,
 and the former things shall not be remembered
 or come into mind.
 18 But be glad and rejoice forever
 in that which I create;
 for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,
 and her people to be a gladness.
 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem
 and be glad in my people;
 no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping
 and the cry of distress.
 20 No more shall there be in it
 an infant who lives but a few days,
 or an old man who does not fill out his days,
 for the young man shall die a hundred years old,
 and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.
 21 They shall build houses and inhabit them;
 they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
 22 They shall not build and another inhabit;
 they shall not plant and another eat;
 for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
 and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
 23 They shall not labor in vain
 or bear children for calamity,
 for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD,
 and their descendants with them.
 24 Before they call I will answer;
 while they are yet speaking I will hear.
 25 The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;
 the lion shall eat straw like the ox,
 and dust shall be the serpent's food.
 They shall not hurt or destroy
 in all my holy mountain,"
 says the LORD.

I, like most red-blooded Americans, enjoy a good fireworks show on the 4th of July to celebrate our country's freedom. Probably the best show I ever saw was up in Brainerd when I was around 18 years old. Those folks up north know how to do it right. At the Brainerd show we sat so close to the fireworks that the burnt pieces of packaging were falling down on us from the sky. The show lacked any reservation. It was long, loud and

brilliant. And I don't know about you, but my favorite part of any fireworks display is the grand finale, the great climax of the show, it's the loudest and the brightest, the most chaotic with booms that you can feel in your chest.

Here in Isaiah 65 and 66 we reach the grand finale of the book of Isaiah, a celebration of an everlasting freedom from sin, Satan, and suffering. In a fireworks display, you need it to be completely dark before you start the show, you need a stark contrast for the glory to be on full display. And in a similar way, throughout the whole book of Isaiah, we've seen a lot of sharp contrast, deep darkness and brilliant light. We've seen dark passages of horrendous sin and terrible wrath, and that jet-black backdrop has made the brilliant explosions of light in this book all the more jaw-dropping and worshipful. And so now we come to the grand finale, two chapters with the darkest backdrop of judgment and the most brilliant and loudest explosions of glory and freedom.

If you're taking notes, here are three questions that I hope to begin to answer with this passage:

1. First, who will live in the new creation and who will not?
2. Second, what will the new creation be like?
3. Third, how should we prepare for the new creation?

1. Who Will Live in the New Creation and Who Will Not? (Isaiah 65:1-16)

First, who will live in the new creation and who will not? Look with me at the first 16 verses. In this first half of the chapter, we see a sharp contrast between two types of people: those who are truly God's people and those who are not. There's a back-and-forth rhythm between those who have heard and followed God's invitation and those who have rejected it.

a. God's Call to the Nations (65:1)

Look with me at verse 1, God's call to the nations:

**I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me;
I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me.
I said, "Here I am, here I am,"
to a nation that was not called by my name.**

This chapter begins with God's invitation to the Gentile nations, for the peoples of the earth to know him and be called by his name. And we know that this first verse is

speaking of God's invitation to the Gentiles because the Apostle Paul interprets it for us in Romans 10:20-21¹. He quotes the first two verses of this chapter and tells us that the first verse speaks of God's call to the Gentiles and the second verse refers to Israel. I love it when the New Testament interprets the Old. God will not afflict his people forever, and God clarifies here that his people will also consist of the Gentile nations who did not know him and weren't looking for him. That's how God's grace works. God initiates relationships; he pursues people, even though they are unrighteous. God's people will include people from every tongue, tribe, language, and nation.

b. God's Repayment for the Sins of the Rebellious People (65:2-7)

Look now at verses 2-7, God's repayment for the sins of the rebellious people. Here we get into the back-and-forth rhythm of speaking about God's people and those who aren't. God is now speaking here of rebellious Israel.

- 2 I spread out my hands all the day
to a rebellious people,
who walk in a way that is not good,
following their own devices;**
- 3 a people who provoke me
to my face continually,
sacrificing in gardens
and making offerings on bricks;**
- 4 who sit in tombs,
and spend the night in secret places;
who eat pig's flesh,
and broth of tainted meat is in their vessels;**
- 5 who say, "Keep to yourself,
do not come near me, for I am too holy for you."
These are a smoke in my nostrils,
a fire that burns all the day.**
- 6 Behold, it is written before me:
"I will not keep silent, but I will repay;
I will indeed repay into their lap
7 both your iniquities and your fathers' iniquities together,
says the LORD;**

Just as God was open to the nations being in relationship with him, so also God opened up his arms to Israel, urging them to return, like a husband pleading with an

¹ Romans 10:20-21 "²⁰ Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me." ²¹ But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

unfaithful wife. But Israel would not return, and provoked God to his face again and again. Israel's problem wasn't atheism like we have today – they knew God existed. Their problem was their hatred of his law and their love for the sinful lifestyle of the nations. Israel was like the toddler or the child who you tell not to do something and then they look you straight in the face and do that exact thing. God's rule didn't feel like freedom to them; being like the other nations did, living however they wanted did. And we read of how Israel provoked and irritated God like smoke in his face: they sacrificed in gardens and not in the temple, they made offerings on bricks which was unauthorized by God, they engaged in cultish acts of sitting in tombs to speak to the dead, and they ate unclean and forbidden foods like the nations. And in verse 5 God rebukes Israel for those who saw themselves as too holy to associate with other people. They created a 1st class tier of holiness, and they disassociated with all other lower, lesser, more sinful people. Think of the parable of the Good Samaritan, where the priest sees the bloodied man and he passes by him on the other side of the road (Luke 10:31).

Are some of these sins common to us? I think so. How often do we provoke God to his face? How often do we do the exact thing that we know he doesn't want us to do? We can't claim ignorance. God's kind arms are open and he calls to repentance, to reconcile with him. And how often do we want to live like the non-Christians around us? How often do we see their sinful lifestyles and wish we could indulge ourselves as they do. God's path is the only true path of freedom and everlasting joy. King Solomon fell deep into the temptation to be like the unbelievers around him. He indulged himself with all the pleasures of the world. But as we read in his book of Ecclesiastes, which he seems to have written toward the end of his life, as he's reflecting on the pleasures he indulged in, he calls them all "**vanity and a striving after the wind**" (Eccl. 2:1-11). There is only emptiness on the other side of gluttony and worldly pleasures. But with God, as Psalm 16 says, there are pleasures forevermore (Ps. 16:11). Let's resist the temptation to be like the world around us. And what about how some in Israel thought they were too holy to associate with others? Do we sometimes do that too? I think so. We separate ourselves from Christians with different theology, from people who have less or more money than us, from people who vote different than us, from people who have committed crimes... we justify all kinds of reasons for keeping our distance. *I don't have enough time. That person isn't safe. That*

person isn't healthy. That person wouldn't understand me. That person doesn't deserve mercy, they need to figure things out themselves. Brothers and sisters, the love of God moved toward us, and he was infinitely more holy than us. Godly holiness is love and love moves towards the unholy.

Our sins aren't so different than Israel's, but Israel refused to repent and so God solemnly promised that he will repay Israel for their iniquities. The people who were called by God's name, lost their privileged place as God's people.

c. God's Preservation of a Remnant, His True Servants (65:8-10)

Now you might ask: *did God reject all the Israelites? Was the story over for the descendants of Jacob?* Verses 8-10 tell us no, God preserved for himself a remnant from Israel, a remnant of true and faithful servants:

8 Thus says the LORD:

**"As the new wine is found in the cluster,
and they say, 'Do not destroy it,
for there is a blessing in it,'
so I will do for my servants' sake,
and not destroy them all.**

**9 I will bring forth offspring from Jacob,
and from Judah possessors of my mountains;
my chosen shall possess it,
and my servants shall dwell there.**

**10 Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks,
and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down,
for my people who have sought me.**

Those of Israel who sought God in faith and were faithful servants in the midst of a crooked generation, those Israelites were God's chosen remnant. God did not want to destroy all of Israel, and so with the Babylonian exile, he preserved a remnant for himself. And hundreds of years later, from that remnant would be born a son to a virgin. In verses 9 and 10 we read that the faithful remnant of Israel would inherit once again the land they had lost. After exile in Babylon they would return to the land. God will not afflict his people forever, for he will preserve a remnant of Israel who will be faithful.

d. God's Judgment toward Those Who Rejected His Call (65:11-12)

In verses 11 and 12 the back-and-forth rhythm now shifts to those who are not God's people. Here we read of God's judgment toward those in Israel who rejected his call.

- 11 But you who forsake the LORD,
who forget my holy mountain,
who set a table for Fortune
and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny,**
- 12 I will destine you to the sword,
and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter,
because, when I called, you did not answer;
when I spoke, you did not listen,
but you did what was evil in my eyes
and chose what I did not delight in."**

Here we read about how Israel was getting mixed up with cultish practices from the other nations. There was a Syrian god named "Fortune" that Isaiah seems to be referencing here. When you think about it, it seems so pitiful that the gods who seemingly control the future need to be wined and dined. God will not be wined and dined; you cannot give him any gift that will buy you the future you want. And so God warns that he will destine Israel to the slaughter. God called to them in mercy, but they did not respond. They chose evil over the good that God delights in.

e. God Blessings for His Servants and God's Curses for the Rebellious (65:13-16)

Now in verses 13-16 the back-and-forth rhythm increases its pace. Here God compares the blessings he will give his faithful servants with the curses he will give to the rebellious.

- 13 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:
"Behold, my servants shall eat,
but you shall be hungry;
behold, my servants shall drink,
but you shall be thirsty;
behold, my servants shall rejoice,
but you shall be put to shame;**
- 14 behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart,
but you shall cry out for pain of heart
and shall wail for breaking of spirit.**
- 15 You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse,
and the Lord GOD will put you to death,**

**but his servants he will call by another name,
16 so that he who blesses himself in the land
shall bless himself by the God of truth,
and he who takes an oath in the land
shall swear by the God of truth;
because the former troubles are forgotten
and are hidden from my eyes.**

The dark night of the curses of God make the blessings of God shine all the brighter. God will graciously bless his servants – they will prosper, they will rejoice, they will be called by a new name and have a peaceful relationship with God. But not so for the wicked. They shall hunger and thirst, they shall live in joyless shame, they will cry and wail and their spirits will break under the curse of God. You would think that when Isaiah proclaimed this to Israel that it would have been so clear to those in rebellion that they needed to repent, but the people’s hearts were hardened to God’s message. Apart from God’s grace, people only hear what they want to hear.

So who will live in the new creation? Those who have responded to God’s open call to come to him, Jew and Gentile alike. Most of the Jews in Isaiah’s day rebelled against God, but God preserved for himself a remnant of faithful servants.

2. What Will the New Creation be Like? (Isaiah 65:17-25)

That leads us now to our second question: what will the new creation be like? The last half of this chapter is the pinnacle of the grand finale, the resolution to all the tension of human history between God and his people. Verse 17:

**17 “For behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth,
and the former things shall not be remembered
or come into mind.**

Here is a vision of the consummation of all God’s promises. If the biblical story from Genesis to Revelation was a mountain range, and if you were to fly high above it at 30,000 feet, what would you see? The first mountain you’d see is the mountain of Creation, massive and shining in its untainted glory, but then as you fly over it you’d see the other half of it eroded, leaving a drop-off, a sheer cliff that drops down, down, down, thousands of feet into a dark valley of rubble, kind of like Mount Saint Helens. This is the Fall, when Adam and Eve sinned and brought death into the world. Then you would see hills, valleys,

and some smaller mountains, God's covenants with his people in the Old Testament, and then you'd notice that these smaller mountains are all leading up to a massive mountain, the mountain of Redemption – when Jesus Christ lived, died, resurrected, and ascended. Everything in the Old Testament leads up to Christ and is fulfilled in him. And then you'd see that everything else in the New Testament flows out of the mountain of Redemption, the rivers of that mountain flow and nourish all the land around it, and then you'd see that everything after the mountain of Redemption leads to the greatest mountain of all, dwarfing any other in size and beauty and glory, a mountain so vast you see no end to it as you see it disappear into the horizon. That is the mountain of Consummation, the creation of the new heavens and new earth, the new Jerusalem. All of biblical history moves toward that end, toward, what God calls at the end of this chapter, his **“holy mountain”** (65:25, cf. 11:9). God created the world, ordained the fall, and sent Jesus to die for that final and great end, that we might forever be in relationship with him in his new creation.

Now one question I have about heaven that I've been thinking about on and off over several years is this: will the new creation be a replacement of the current creation, a completely new, start from scratch creation, or will the new creation be a renewal of creation, a transformation or glorification or sanctification of the present universe and everything in it, except the wicked? Is there a complete discontinuity between the present creation and the future creation, or is there a continuity, and if so, to what degree? Will the heavens and the earth be utterly destroyed with fire or will the fire refine it and sanctify it, as fire does with gold? Will it be like the resurrection of Christ, where he was recognizable in his resurrected body, but different and invincible? Is it like the transformation of a caterpillar to a butterfly, or a seed to an oak tree, a transformation so unrecognizable, but still having an organic connection to what it originally was? I'm honestly undecided and still studying scripture on this, it isn't absolutely clear, so maybe this is one of those wonderful mysteries God has for us to stoke our curiosity and longing for heaven.

Here's a common question that arises from verse 17: in heaven, will we forget everything about this earth and this life? No, I don't think this is making an absolute statement about our minds being erased of what we experienced here, Men in Black style. I don't think we'll ever forget how Jesus redeemed us from sin and death and Satan and suffering. In Revelation 4-5 we have a vision of heavenly worship and the people remember

the past and praise God for creating everything. The Lamb of God is praised, which is a title that only makes sense if the past is remembered, and he is praised for shedding his blood at the cross. So I don't think our memories of this life will be completely erased. Instead, what is meant is that the new creation will so significantly transcend, eclipse, and outshine this present creation, that we will not look back longingly at it, like Lot's wife looking back at Sodom or Israel longing for Egypt in the wilderness. What is new is so much better that we will forget the old. And at the same time, I think it's likely that God will heal us of some of our worst memories by completely removing them from us, memories that haunt us and cause us great distress. It may be that we will remember that the days were evil, but we will not remember the details... we will be free. Whatever God does leave for us to remember will no longer give us sadness or fear or grief or shame, for everything will be reframed in joy. Our story on earth will be a joyful story. Because the consummation of heaven is so good, it's joy will put our whole lives into a new light. The end of a story can completely change one's perspective of everything that preceded it.

Look now at verses 18 and 19, and see the repeated themes of everlasting gladness and joy:

- 18 But be glad and rejoice forever
in that which I create;
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,
and her people to be a gladness.**
- 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem
and be glad in my people;
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping
and the cry of distress.**

The new heavens and new earth will be a home of endless joy. Here in this life, joy is bittersweet, tainted with trials, but there our joy will forever be full and lasting, we will sing and dance and play like little children who don't have a care in the world! And weeping will be no more, and if there are tears, they will only be tears of joy and of laughing so hard. This is what the new creation will be like – do you want to go there? Look now at verse 20, not only will there be no more weeping, but death will be no more:

- 20 No more shall there be in it
an infant who lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not fill out his days,
for the young man shall die a hundred years old,
and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.**

Death will no longer take our children. Death will no longer take anyone from us, from living a full life forever. As Isaiah 25:8 says about life on the mountain of God, another name for God's new creation dwelling:

**8 He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces,**

The end of verse 20 sounds like death will still be around, but I take the second to last phrase to be a more poetic hypothetical to move us to be in awe of how long people will live in the new Jerusalem, and the last line of the cursed sinner dying, that line reminds us once again of the separation between the blessed servants who cannot be touched by death and the cursed sinners who cannot escape death, even if they've escaped it for 100 years, they will face God's judgment throne and the fires of hell. God will also throw death itself into hell and so in the new creation we will be free from our worst enemy. There will be the greatest family reunion in the New Jerusalem, and death will never again separate us from our loved ones. Don't you want to go there?

Verses 21-23 speaks of the prosperity we'll enjoy in our heavenly country.

**21 They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.**
**22 They shall not build and another inhabit;
they shall not plant and another eat;
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.**
**23 They shall not labor in vain
or bear children for calamity,
for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD,
and their descendants with them.**

There will be work for us in the new earth. Work is not an inherent evil, but a good God created before the Fall. Promised here is the reverse of the curse that has plagued our work. There will be no more thorns, no more blood, sweat and tears as we work, and our work will not be threatened with blight and pests – our work will be holy and fruitful and fulfilling, a joy. As we explore and build in our new universe, we won't be afraid, we will be curious, excited, ready to explore and get dirty like busy little toddlers. Don't you want to go there? And because only God is all-knowing, we won't instantly know everything in our glorified state, but we will learn, eager for insight and knowledge, eager to develop new skills and talents, to take on new challenges. Don't you want to go to this holy mountain?

No longer will we live in an Ecclesiastes world of vanity, of chasing after wind, of pleasures that end, of work that amounts to nothing... no everything will be satisfying and all our work permanent, it will have lasting value because it all will redound to the glory of God. Boredom will be no more. Don't you want to go there? We will design inventions of higher genius than DaVinci, create art more stunning than Michaelangelo, discover math and physics in our new world with more insight than Einstein, we will build towers higher than babel, and because we will boast in God alone for all our work, nothing we do will ever be destroyed because of pride. Let's go there! Enter the door to the new creation, the door of Jesus Christ, and all the new heavens and new earth will be yours, and you will no longer need to fear death.

Look now at verse 24. Here we get a taste of the intimate communion we will have with God himself in that heavenly country:

**24 Before they call I will answer;
while they are yet speaking I will hear.**

God will be ever near us, ever close to us. We will walk with him, talk with him, like the two men talking with Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Every prayer of ours will be answered with a Yes even before we've asked him. We will be secure in his love, fully known and fully loved and fully enjoyed. We will no longer feel the urge to hide ourselves from God, for our shame will be covered and gone. Our great enjoyment will be communing with Jesus face-to-face, learning and exploring the deep things of God by His Spirit, discovering new wonders of his character and works every day. When Emma and I visited Hawaii a few years ago for our 10th anniversary, it was both our first time there, and throughout our whole trip we kept seeing new beauty we had never seen before. And it got me thinking that heaven is probably like that. We'll keep discovering new beauty from God's endless creativity and his infinitely deep and glorious character.

Look now at the last verse, verse 25, the promised peace and safety of the new creation:

**25 The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,
and dust shall be the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain,"
says the LORD.**

Enemies will be gone – enmity with other Christians that we had in this life will be healed and reconciled permanently. The creatures of the new creation will not threaten to eat us. The peace, the shalom between God and man, between man and man, between man and creature, will be a universal peace. Everything will change in the new creation, except what we see in the third line: **“and dust shall be the serpent’s food.”** This phrase echoes Satan’s curse from Genesis 3. The curse will be reversed for man and woman, but not for the serpent. He will eat dust as he is finally crushed by our warrior Savior, and then he will drown in the lake of fire for ever and ever. The new creation will be completely safe from every enemy we’ve ever known on earth, even sin, the enemy within us, that enemy will be completely eradicated as we live in complete obedience and love and freedom in our glorified bodies.

This passage is a short but brilliantly glorious preview of what the new creation will be like. Do you want to go there? Are you prepared to go there?

3. How Should We Prepare for the New Creation?

The first thing that we must do to prepare for the new creation is we must become new creations ourselves. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, **“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold², the new has come.”** When you believe in Jesus and repent from your sins, you become a new creation. The life of the everlasting kingdom has been born in you and you begin to act like a citizen of heaven, you begin to put on what is permanent and just as the new creation will never pass away, so also no one can take away your everlasting life once you have put your trust in Jesus.

Another essential way we are to prepare for heaven is by living lives of holiness before God, by beginning to put on what will be permanent in the new creation. The new creation will be a world of love and peace and reconciliation and joy and freedom from sin, so let’s begin to put those things on now. The more we grow in holiness, the more we’ll want to live on God’s holy mountain.

² It’s interesting that Paul says “Behold”, and my guess is that he’s pointing us back to this passage that speaks of new creation and says “behold” again and again and again.

Let's also prepare for the new creation by sharing our faith with others. God has called out his invitation to the whole world, that if anyone believes in Jesus, anyone, they can have an everlasting relationship with God. So let's share God's gospel invitation with others.

And finally, let's prepare with prayer. Let's pray regularly for Christ to return, to resurrect his people with glorified bodies, to bring justice and judgment on our enemies, and to create a new home of peace and prosperity for us and all of God's people. There is so much suffering in this world, in this city, in our church body. We need Jesus to come back soon. Let's pray now for his return.