

Revelation 6:1-8 – The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

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[0 : 0 0] If you have a Bible, turn with me to Revelation chapter 6. We are, we're going through the book of Revelation. And we want to hear every single verse.

Every single word is important. And so let's ask God to help us to understand these things. Father, we come to you, Lord.

We pray, Lord, that you give us understanding this morning. Lord, give us humble hearts to receive what you have for us. Lord, many of these things that we're going to read just seem out of this world.

Unbelievable. Unbelievable. And Lord, we don't want to dwell on the fantastic things, Lord. But we want to dwell on the fantastic one, who is Jesus. Lord, so we pray, Lord, that we would know more of you, Lord, and who you are and how you deal with us.

And Lord, give us a heart response that is equal to that. Lord, so, Lord, we pray that you would keep us balanced.

[1 : 0 2] Lord, help us not to run in one direction or the other. Lord, help us to trust you. Lord, because you've been so faithful to us. Lord, and your word says that you're still going to be faithful, no matter what comes.

Lord, so we pray today, Lord, that we would get a sense, Lord, just of your faithfulness and your goodness to us. In Jesus' name. Amen. Over the years, one of my favorite TV shows has been Escape to the Chateau.

I judge by the laughter. Some of you know what that is. And by some of the laughter, you may either agree with me or you may be mocking me.

Either way, if you don't know, it's the story of Lieutenant Dick Strawbridge and his wife, Angel, who buy a 13th century castle that is in bits.

All right. You know, the walls are falling down. There's no heating. There's no electricity. There's no hot water. There's not even a sewage system. And this chateau is built on a, what looks like to me, just a mound of dirt surrounded by a moat that is treacle, thick mud and probably a lot of sewage.

[2 : 2 5] The outbuildings are dilapidated. The surrounding gardens are overrun. And what made it a fascinating program is that, and also a riveting watch, is that all of the problems that they encountered trying to fix this chateau, this castle.

For example, you may not know this. I didn't know this. No one told me this. Like, this is news. This was news to me. You can't just put in a sewage system in a 600-year-old castle.

You can't just do that. You can't just rock up and go, just going to put a sewage system in. Right? Because the foundations to the castle laid on the remains of an older castle. And the castle that is there currently, in some places, the walls are two meters thick.

Like, you can't just rock out your drill and put a hole in that. And the foundations were built on a castle that also had two meter thick walls. You can't drill down through that.

Plus, hilariously, you can't just dig a hole anywhere you like when a building is surrounded by a moat without it filling up with water.

[3 : 41] Dick and Angel had to do a lot of other things just to be in a place where they could put the sewage in. And some of those things, you're thinking, why on earth are you doing that?

And like, you know, four episodes later, 30,000 pounds later, you know, they've hired some guy, one person in all of Europe that knows how to put a hole in a wall.

And, you know, it's a riveting watch. And it's a riveting watch because of all the problems that go with renovating an old house.

I recall that analogy because this is the big picture of what Jesus is doing in the next 13 chapters of Revelation. Last week in chapter 5, we saw Jesus step up to claim a scroll.

And that scroll was that ownership of the world. He was going to take ownership of the world. You remember we talked about how the debt had been paid. Jesus has paid our debt.

[4 : 52] And now in chapter 6, Jesus is going to break each seal on the scroll. And as he does, what we see in the next 13, 14 chapters is what happens when Jesus comes to take ownership of a broken world.

Like he's not ready to move in. Like Dick and Angel couldn't just rock up to their castle and go, we're ready to move in. No electric, no hot water, no sewage. They had to do a lot of work before they could move in.

But I believe what we're seeing in this chapter is actually just that. Is Jesus is doing a lot of the work on the earth in readiness for him to move in.

And what I think we see is something that is still yet future. Others point to the expansion of the Roman Empire that this is talking about under Marcus Aurelius.

And then peace with the Germans in 180 AD. But I hold the view that this is talking about a future event known as the Great Tribulation. And what we'll see is that at each point, as we focus on the seals and then the trumpets and then the bowls, is Jesus is coming to put things right.

[6 : 11] And that's a really important idea for us to hold on to. Is that these things that we read aren't out of control.

They're not out of God's grip. They are actually God bringing judgment on the world so that in Revelation 20, he can move in.

He's setting up the conditions until finally Satan, who, if you like, has been an illegal squatter in this castle. For many years, for too long.

Will be bound. This is what it says in Revelation chapter 20. John says, So like if there was any confusion as to who that guy was, John goes, let's just let me tell you his name is Satan.

Right? So this is what we're working towards in our text.

[7 : 23] It's super easy to get bogged down in the detail of the chapter and take our eyes off the purpose for the detail.

The purpose for the detail is that Jesus is coming back and he's going to reign righteously on the earth. And so it's important for us to remember that sin and death aren't the final two words.

Righteousness and renewal are the final words. That's where we're working towards. And what we see in this text are two main things under one heading. It's coming on the screen. The heading is that God's certain judgment comes over time.

God's certain judgment comes over time. And then the two things that we'll look at, the two main points that I think we'll see is that God's judgment is slow because of his mercy.

And God's judgment is sure because of his justice. Right? Now, you've got to hold on to both of those at the same time. Okay?

[8 : 32] That's living in tension, isn't it? Right? God's judgment is slow. Why? Because he's merciful. God's judgment is sure it's going to happen because of his justice.

So let's just talk about those two things really quickly before we launch into our text. What it means is that Jesus isn't going to come in one kind of massive cataclysmic sort of way without any notice, without any kind or opportunity to turn to God.

The coming of Jesus has been told about beforehand. And there are discernible signs that tell us that his return is close.

But in every age, including our own, we can say that it hasn't happened yet. Right? Even the psalmist made note of this. Right?

Back in the day, the psalmist said, The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love. He's slow.

[9 : 35] Even though sometimes we think he is slow to act. 2 Peter 3 says, The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise, as some count slowness, but is patient towards you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

And so God is slow to anger because he's merciful. But it's not because he's delayed. It's not because he's lazy.

This is in itself an act of God's kindness. God is kind. Peter illustrates this with the story of Noah and the ark.

Peter's like, let me give you an illustration. Here's what I mean. He says, 1 Peter 3.20, He said that God's patience waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared.

Do you notice that? The ark is being prepared. The ark is being built. There's Noah with his kids. They're hammering away. Everybody's coming to look at this big boat. What's happening? God is being kind.

[10 : 40] He gave people eight days to get onto the ark. And even as the events in this chapter start to happen, he is calling people to repent. He is slow in his judgment because of his mercy.

And in his slowness, he is calling people to change their minds about God and turn to him. But notice the second thing. God's judgment is sure because of his justice.

That means that God's judgment will come. It will come. That's what this means. Look, this is the same thing that Paul said to the Athenian philosophers in Acts chapter 17.

He said that the times of ignorance, God overlooked. But now he commands all people everywhere to repent because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world.

Like he knows what's going on. He's not slow. He's not putting it back. He's not changing the calendar. He is slow. Why? Because he's merciful. But also he is just at the same time.

[11 : 49] Paul is saying that there is a fixed day in which sin will be judged. You see, look, and I know you know this already. What sin does, ultimately, what sin does is destroys.

That's what sin does. Sin always destroys. It destroys humanity's relationship with God. It destroys marriages. It destroys children. It destroys lives. It destroys communities.

It destroys cultures and nations. And the world is suffering under the weight of sin. And sin is always destructive. You want to know the answer to why our world is like it is.

The answer is sin. Sin destroys. Simple. Jesus said that God so loved the world, John 3, 16, that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish.

But have eternal life. Then he said this, For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world. That's not the purpose. But in order that the world might be saved through him.

[12 : 54] And God in love has come to judge that which destroys. Think of it this way. Every year there are around 600 murders that take place in England and Wales.

30% of those involve under 24 year olds. 20% of those of the 600 are unsolved.

That means that of the 600 people losing their families or losing their lives and the family members losing sons and daughters and brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers, 120 of those family members are robbed of any kind of closure and any kind of justice.

Every day we hear more and more people being trafficked across borders, don't we? There's even TV programs about border control.

It's a big problem. They're being trafficked across borders with promise of jobs and security only to arrive finding that they are forced either to work in the sex industry or forced labor.

[14 : 11] There are an estimated 40 million victims trapped in modern day slavery. 20% of them are girls under the age of 18.

It's a question. Where is the justice for them? Look, there are things in this world that must be judged if God is a God of love. That they have to be.

If they're not judged, then God, we cannot claim that God is a God of love. If God doesn't judge those things, then they are all OK. And I'm just going to turn a blind eye to it.

How could we ever say that God is a God of love? The Bible time and time again assures us of these words in Hebrews 10 verse 30. Vengeance is mine, says the Lord. I will repay.

If you've ever been mistreated, this is a reminder that they'll never get away with it. If you've ever suffered loss, this is a reminder that they'll never get away with it. If you've ever been the victim, this is a reminder that sin and death aren't the final words because God's judgment is sure.

[15 : 24] It's coming. Now this concept of being slow because of his mercy and sure because of his justice is summed up in Nahum.

Nahum chapter 1 verse 3. The Lord is slow to anger and great in power and the Lord will by no means clear the guilty. That's the tension.

We have a God who is slow to anger. Why? Because he is merciful. And he will by no means clear the guilty. And God has not only made promises to us, he has disclosed his plan to us.

This disclosure of God's plan is not only a kind of blueprint that you can use to predict definitely what is going to happen, but it's the kind of disclosure that gives us not just thoughts about the future, but listen, it gives us what we need today.

This whole chapter, and I would probably even suggest the next 13 chapters, what we need to know is that God is trustworthy. Can we trust God?

[16 : 41] Will God be faithful? Is God a God of love? And will he judge evil? Is there going to be people that get away with it? Are there people that are out of God's sight?

Who will slip under the radar? Look, the next 13 chapters unequivocally say no. Every wrong will be righted.

And he has a plan to deal with evil and pain and suffering. And he will be just. He will be merciful. No matter what happens to us, he will come for us.

And so as we get into the text, look, Jesus is here, and he is taking ownership of the world. And he is breaking seven seals.

And we see in this chapter, he breaks six seals. And then the seventh seal opens up seven trumpets. And then the seventh trumpet opens up seven bowls.

[17 : 46] We'll get to that. All right? And so he's breaking these seals. And probably, and there is some debate, but probably this chapter, chapter six, takes us all the way through the great tribulation.

All the way through the great tribulation period. From probably actually, you know, before or maybe the period begins, all the way through to the end and then the coming again of Jesus. And it is best not to see these things necessarily as a linear progression.

Like one thing happens and another thing happens and another thing happens. Think of it as an accordion where one thing then triggers something simultaneously. And at the same time. And look, what we're going to see again, and we're going to see the demonstration of these two truths.

God's judgment is slow because of his mercy. And God's judgment is sure because of his justice. So verse one, Paul says, no, Paul doesn't say anything because that's the wrong book.

John says, now I watched. when the lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, come.

[19 : 10] And I looked. Now, pause there. You didn't think we're going to get much further than that, did you? The first four seals that are going to be broken are known as the four horsemen of the apocalypse.

It sends shivers down your spine, doesn't it? Right? The four horsemen of the apocalypse. And what we're going to see is these four seals have something, some features in common.

So each one is announced by one of the four creatures that were introduced in chapter four. Each announcement is a command to four different horses to come out, or to literally come, come and go forth.

Each command results in, in the appearance of a different colored horse. Black, red, pale, or green, and black, white, red, pale, and black, in that order.

And then each have a horseman riding the horse who has some kind of power over the earth given to him. So this is where we get the idea of the four horsemen of the apocalypse.

[20 : 28] And it's probably important to say that before we get too far into the text, these horsemen, and you can just jot these Bible texts down, because I'm not going to go through them.

But it's important to note that they appear elsewhere in the Bible. Like the four horsemen, I know it's kind of almost synonymous with the book of Revelation, right? And it's almost synonymous with kind of like a lot of weird stuff that goes on in circles today.

But they don't only appear in Revelation. They also appear in Zechariah chapter 1, and Zechariah chapter 6, and Ezekiel 14.

And get this, they also appear in Leviticus 26. Like these guys haven't just rocked up at the end of the show, and like, here we are, let's go out, right?

They're not just like cover boys for that death metal band, right? These guys appear, and the effects of what they do appear all the way through the Bible.

[21 : 36] It's also important to see that they correspond directly to the sermon that Jesus gave on the Tuesday before his crucifixion. So the sermon is recorded actually in three places.

It's in Matthew 24, Mark 13, Mark 13, and Luke 21. And it's sometimes called the little apocalypse because of the similarities in the sermon. They're so close.

So we have four horsemen in the Old Testament. The general conditions that the four horsemen bring in the Gospels, and now in Revelation we see them.

But something to consider is that Jesus says in Matthew 24, verse 8, Jesus said, all of these are the beginning of birth pains or labor.

They're the beginning of labor. So there's a real sense that the problems that are being highlighted in our text have been true of all time and all places.

[22 : 37] But they're now just coming to our head. There is a due date approaching, if you like, and birth is about to happen. And these things are a pattern of spiritual conflict that have occurred throughout history.

But they are all here to move us, most importantly, to the return of King Jesus, to establish his earthly kingdom of a thousand years. That's what's coming to a head.

That's the birth, if you like. So John says, as he's watching, he sees the lamb open one of the seven seals, and it's accompanied by one of the four living creatures, in a loud voice, calling, saying, come.

And John looked, verse 1, verse 2, and behold, a white horse, and its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

And he opened the second seal, and I heard the second living creature say, come. And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another.

[24 : 01] And he was given a great sword. And he opened the third seal, and I heard the living creature say, come. And I looked, and behold, a black horse, and its rider had a pair of scales in his hand.

And when I, and I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say, a quart of wheat for a denarii, and three quarts of barley for a denarii, do not harm through oil and wine.

And he opened the fourth seal, and I heard the fourth living creature say, come. And I looked, and behold, a pale horse, and its rider's name was Death.

And Hades followed him, and they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and by wild beasts of the earth.

So these four judgments take place against sin on earth. And the first rider in verse two is given a white horse, probably representing righteousness and holiness.

[25 : 03] And he had a bow, and it says that a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering and to conquer. So he had some bows, but no arrows, which normally refers to someone who conquers in a way without war.

And he was given a crown, so he was given imperial dignity of some kind. And it's been suggested that this first rider is Messiah, is Jesus. And the gospel is the bow in which he conquers.

But honestly, that view has more problems than has solutions. And it's best to see this first rider as a movement of Christ's imposters.

We know that this is probably the right view, because in Jesus' sermon, the little apocalypse, there in Matthew 24, about the end times, he talks about the emergence of many imposter Christs.

This is what he says. Jesus says, See that no one leads you astray, for many will come in my name, saying, I am the Christ. So many imposters. And they will lead many astray.

[26 : 11] So this is a general movement that seeks to draw people to it. And look, it looks like orthodox Christianity. Because otherwise people would run from it.

It looks like the genuine thing, but it's a fake. Listen to this quote, reporting in the Washington Times, Rachel Brayton says this. It's coming on the screen so you can read along.

American Christianity has fallen thanks to cultural corrosion and a lack of biblical literacy. A new fake Christianity is now being preached within the American church.

This counterfeit religion is moralistic, therapeutic deism. A worldview that has quickly gained prominence and given many Americans, and I don't think it's just Americans, but this is from the Washington Post, given many Americans a theology that looks nothing like historical Christianity or hysterical Christianity, despite, yeah, either way, despite what they may claim.

She goes on to say that moralistic, therapeutic deism, or watered down, feel good, fake Christianity, is the most popular worldview in the United States today. From this movement, eventually, will come a prominent person who in Revelation 13 is described as a beast who comes as a counterfeit Christ, also known as the Antichrist.

[27 : 36] Paul talks about him as being the son of perdition. And so, what John is seeing is a worldwide delusion, a worldwide attempt to draw people away from the one true gospel.

And so, there is help for us, even today, if this is true, that this is a movement that has been true of all times and all places, and is going to a head, going to a place, going to a birth, if you like, there is value in helping each other, you and me, each other, to become biblically literal and disciple those into biblical literacy.

So that our devotion is truly Christian. The second rider is called out in the same way with the command to come.

Verse 4, Out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take away from the, or to take peace away from the earth so that people should slay, or the word is butcher, one another.

And he was given a great sword. Jesus said in Matthew 24, verse 6, You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you're not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end isn't yet. For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom.

[29 : 03] So there's this general nature in this second seal that brings war, it brings internal strife, international and civil strife to the world. And while this rider was given a large sword, notice that he is said not to kill anyone.

And the reason for that is because what happens is, this is what happens when peace is removed, is people that kill each other. So the command isn't to go out and kill. The command is to remove peace.

And we'll talk about that in a minute. And it's interesting actually when you read some of the Jewish and Babylonian literature, there is an expectation that when Messiah returns, well before Messiah returns, there will be civil strife.

Before he returns, there is an expectation in their literature that that's what will happen. And of course, it is a sad indicator of the times that we live in, isn't it? That war and murder don't even make the news.

Like I had a text this morning from Natalia in Kiev in Ukraine. Bombs are dropping. Is it on the news? It's not on the news, is it? Such commonplace today in today's society.

[30 : 19] And we don't even hear about the wars that are going on elsewhere in the world. Wars that have been going on for decades and decades in some places in Africa. Well, this idea of the red horse going out is again this general indicator that things are starting to get worse and worse and worse and to a point.

Then he said, the third rider was called out in the same way the command to come. And John says in verse 5, I looked and behold a black horse and its rider had a pair of scales in its hand and I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying a quart of wheat for a denarii and three quarts of barley for a denarii and do not harm the oil and wine.

Jesus said in Matthew 24, verse 7, that there will be famines. And one of the things that follows war oftentimes is famine. We've seen that, haven't we?

Even in Europe, even in the last few years, what is being blamed for the increase in the price of baked beans? War in Ukraine and all of the inflation war.

And so, the rider here, we're told, had a pair of scales in his hands and notice in verse 6, I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures.

[31 : 51] From chapter 5, verse 6, we know that there is a throne in the midst of the four living creatures and the one on the throne that Jesus, the lamb, takes the scroll from.

Probably God, the father. And so, this voice is saying a quart of wheat for a denarii and three quarts of barley for a denarii.

So, let me just kind of put this in a little bit of perspective. A quart of wheat is a day's shopping. All right? So, whatever that is for you, like when you go to Lidl or Tesco or whatever, get it delivered, whatever that looks like, that's a quart of wheat.

It's a day's shopping. It's what you need for a day. Barley was poor man's wheat and it was normally actually fed to animals or disgraced soldiers.

And it's saying that someone will work all day for just enough wheat to sustain himself or enough barley to keep his family alive.

[33 : 07] Now, of course, again, we don't need to talk about inflation. We don't need to talk about the cost of living crisis. There are just examples of how quickly life on the breadline can come about. Quickly.

We weren't talking about this so much last year. But then there's this strange phrase, do not harm the oil and wine. And of course, the oil and wine are commodities of the wealthy.

And so when it comes to famine or at least high costs, it doesn't affect those who are wealthy enough to survive. There is a huge disparity today, isn't there, between those who have and those who have not.

And there has been for many years. But that gap is getting wider and wider and wider. Here, the inequality will prevail. The poor will have it extremely hard while the wealthy will experience really no interruption to their luxurious lifestyle.

I mean, I don't know if you've noticed. I haven't particularly noticed. But Rolls Royce is still on sale. Like, if life was so hard, and it is hard for many, many people, but if it was globally so hard for everyone, luxury brands would have disappeared.

[34 : 28] Today, it's estimated that one in nine people on Earth do not have enough food to be healthy. one in four people living in sub-Sahara Africa is undernourished.

And that is what hunger and famine is like today. But it's going to get worse. The fourth rider is called out again in the same way with the command to come.

John says in verse seven, when he, again, that's Jesus, opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, come, and I looked, and behold, a pale horse.

Notice that that word pale is the Greek word chloros, and it means pale green. We get the word chlorine from it, which may help or not, I don't know, but it's the color that you turn when you're sick.

It's chloros. So it's that color. It's not a great looking color horse, pale green. Right? I don't even know whether they exist. Pale green horses, anybody?

[35 : 35] No? No. Okay, no. Gilezzo say no, absolutely not. So take it from, that's the truth right there. So this rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him.

They're not impressed with that either. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by angry plagues of the earth, the wild beasts.

The word beast is actually Therion. And it's an interesting word because it doesn't actually mean, you know, when we think about wild beasts, we think of lions and tigers and bears.

Oh my, right? That's what we think of. But actually, the idea, it can also mean anything that is living, biological or bacterial. So it doesn't just mean like, you know, all of a sudden the lions are going to break out of the zoos and just start ripping people apart.

Tuberculosis, for example, if left untreated, kills 50% of people it infects. So Jesus said in Matthew 24, he said, then there will be great tribulation.

[36 : 59] When? How? Such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And in those days, had it not been cut short, no human would be saved.

But for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short. And so with this fourth opening, there is a rapid increase in the severity of the judgment. If you just read that last part of verse 8 again, they were given authority over a fourth of the earth to kill with sword and famine and pestilence and wild beasts of the earth.

Never has there been a time when the four problems of the fourth seal have operated simultaneously over a fourth of the world. And when you do the maths on this, the numbers are humbling.

I don't know whether you're aware, but earth's population has just clicked over to 8 billion and that is staggering. But if the Lord were to return today, according to verse 8, 2 billion people would die.

It's going to make all the wars and all the pandemics and all the famines that have ever been shrink in comparison. This is some of the stuff that's going on today and it's horrid.

[38 : 39] There is inequality all over the place. People being used by other people all over the place. There is injustice. Paul said in 2 Thessalonians this, in chapter 2, he said that the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.

Lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. So, what Paul is saying is that there is a he who restrains, who is restraining evil right now.

What we see right now in all of its horror and all of its gore and everything that turns us away is restrained. And one day he, the restrainer, is going to be taken out of the way.

The restraint is going to stop. Paul talks about the Holy Spirit who is now restraining evil in the world today. What is the Holy Spirit doing? He's restraining this time.

All of the world's wickedness today is a restrained version of what is to come once the Holy Spirit stops restraining. So, what is this? What do these four seals mean for us?

[40 : 07] Because I see the tendency normally, certainly within, you know, Christendom, is to look at these four horsemuggers and make them something bigger than they probably are, or to ignore them completely.

To get lost in the danger of deception, which is very real, but to get lost there, to get caught up in the numbers and the figures and all of that, and then to hide ourselves away in a cave.

Or, the other response is quite often, well, I'm just going to ignore it, don't believe it, it's for another time, don't understand it, who are the horsemen anyway?

And yet, we're not called to that. What we see in this chapter, in the previous chapter, is Jesus coming because he has paid a debt.

He has paid the sin debt that is owed and he is reclaiming the earth for himself. And whilst these four seals are pictures of everything that is true about the world today, once the Holy Spirit is gone, things are going to get worse.

[41 : 34] So what is the lesson for us? Well, I think the lesson is found in those two statements that God in his judgment is slow because of his mercy.

Look, we all sin from time to time. I was expecting a little bit of an amen as an encouragement.

We all sin from time to time, right? I mean, like, I'm not the only one. Okay, good, thanks. Right? So we all sin from time to time. How do we respond to sin? How do we respond to the sin in our own lives?

Because there is stuff. There's stuff, and when I mean sin, I don't mean just like being overtly against God. I'm also talking about, you know, we've talked about sin as sin is something I do, sin is something that is done to me, and sin is something that is done in my presence.

How do we respond to those three ideas of sin? Are we okay with it? Do we let it go? Why?

[42 : 38] Because we believe God is slow. Not because God is slow because of his mercy, but because God is slow and he approves. That's the danger, isn't it?

Because judgment doesn't come, I mean Peter warns us that because judgment doesn't come, we assume that God approves. And God is okay with it.

And God is turning a blind eye to it. How do we respond to our own sin? How do we respond to the sin that is done in our presence? How do we respond to the sin that is done to us?

Sin that is done to us? Justice. God will one day act surely, why?

Because of his justice. And he will set those things right, just as much as he is setting all of the other things right. And our response to sin in our own lives, the things that we do, the things that we think, the way that we think, the things that we don't do, also the things that happen to us and happen to others, of course, should lead us to some deep reflection.

[43 : 57] God's judgment is not to judge. God is accepting of sin because he is slow to judge. God isn't accepting of sin.

He is accepting of his savior, Jesus, who paid the debt for my sin and continually offers me mercy. God's certain judgment comes over time.

It comes slowly because he's a merciful God. And he's calling us to repent. Even as Christians, you know, repentance isn't one thing that we do at the beginning of our life of being a Christian and going, well, I have repented.

Like, I'm finding like repentance is like a, it's not even a daily thing, is it? It's like a moment by moment thing where we have to remind ourselves our hearts and minds to turn towards God rather than away.

And he calls us to repent when? Now. When is the day of salvation? Today's the day of salvation. And what that means is as long as it is today, there is opportunity to turn to God.

[45 : 13] That's how gracious God is. As long as today is today, God is God to God to live. God will come surely. How does this motivate us to live?

How does it motivate us to share the gospel with others who haven't realized his mercy yet? Because God's judgment will surely come and he will put things right.

And we will see in the rest of the chapter, in chapter six, which we won't look at this morning, so relax, that the fifth seal shows us all of these martyred saints, all of these people that realized too late that God is a God of mercy and they had to give their lives to it.

And so this morning we're coming to a time of communion. And we do things very, very simply here. And we see this as very much a personal thing between you and the Lord.

Paul instructs us to examine our hearts and what a great passage of scripture to remind us to confess our sins to the Lord.

[46 : 33] John says if we confess our sins he is what? Faithful and he is just. To forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And so the band are going to come up and lead us in a song.

During that song I want to encourage you to get out of your chair, come to the table, collect your elements, return to your chair and partake when you want to.

What I will say is that this is a table for believers. So this is remembering and acknowledging again what Jesus has done for you.

That he is a merciful God. He knows your sin. He knows my sin. And yet he has not judged us. He is slow in his mercy.

So let's bow our hearts together. I'm going to pray. The team are going to lead us in a song and enjoying the song. Please come up and take the elements. Father, we come to you, Lord. We want to acknowledge, Lord, that there are significant things in our lives, Lord, that we know that we struggle with, that you know about, Lord.

[47 : 45] Lord, there are things that will cause us to become fearful or anxious or afraid or even sometimes angry. There are things that we don't understand about sometimes the way you work and that can cause us to question judgmentally what you are doing.

Sometimes we feel we're all alone and we're the only one left standing. Lord, we want to thank you, Lord, that with every breath, everyone that we take in and exhale, Lord, that is a reminder, Lord, of your mercy.

Lord, with every breath is a moment longer, our hearts beating, our lives alive, for us to turn to you. Lord, and for many, many of us, Lord, we've been following you for a long time.

Lord, and repentance is sometimes just one of those other words that we use in the church. Lord, but we also acknowledge, Lord, that quite often our relationship isn't as strong as it should be.

Lord, we don't come to you as eagerly, as readily, as honestly, as truthfully. And Lord, so we pray this morning, Lord, as we come to your table, Lord, we want to thank you for it.

[49 : 15] Lord, we thank you, Jesus, for paying the debt, paying our debt. Thank you, Lord, that because you paid our debt, we're now not appointed to wrath.

Lord, we thank you, Lord, that we can take these elements just as symbols, Lord, as a reminder, Lord, that we are now identified in your death. Lord, that we have died to self and now that we live for you.

Lord, help us to do that. Lord, help us to be people who know and understand the sin that we do, the sin that is done to us and the sin that is done in our presence.

Lord, act accordingly as you would act. Lord, to help us, we pray. Lord, we come to you. Lord, we want to thank you. Lord, we confess any unconfessed sin to you.

Lord, and we believe that as we confess, you forgive. Lord, you cleanse us and the slate is wiped clean because of you.

[50 : 23] Lord, we thank you in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. God