**Buying Gold Refined by Fire in the Face of Persecution and Compromise**

**Mt. 24 and Rev. 3:18**

2/26/21

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Turn to Matthew 24. We are just going to look at a couple of passages, and I am going to give broad strokes of what we are doing in this six-week fast. Lou Engle called this fast, and it was on his heart for it to be a fast for what is happening in the nation of Israel. We are taking hold of that, but we are adding a few more dimensions to our local focus here, because every group that is engaging in this has their own narrative, yet we are tracking globally with the prayer for Israel. About the Israel prayer, a lot of folk do think that is important because they know it is in the Bible, but they don’t really get it yet. Part of our desire even in the next twelve Friday nights—although we are on the second week, so we have ten after this—we want to break down some of those subjects so that we are actually praying with understanding and agreement, not just “Oh, yeah, Israel is important, and Isaiah 19 is cool, and Psalm 2 is an important chapter.” I want us to know it a little more than just the broad strokes of what it is. So we are going to take time and unpack these week by week.

Well, Matthew 24, is the famous chapter where Jesus gave information about and taught on the end times. Let’s go ahead and look at it, if you would, verses 6-8. It says, “First of all,” and Stuart did such a great job last week, I loved it! He started with this passage “See that you are not troubled.” This is not a small exhortation. This is a very important exhortation. “See that you are leaning into the word of God. See that you are growing in relationship with on-fire believers” because leaning into the word of God we will have the biblical narrative more than just a little bit I mean we are actually taking it seriously. We are re-aligning with God’s leadership because we see His plan, and we are growing in kingdom relationships with people who are on-fire for the Lord. Those are critical components of not being overcome with fear and being troubled. Stuart said it well when he said that when you get troubled, you become vulnerable to confusion and fear. Then you get into confusion and fear and deception, and then you make really bad spiritual decisions.

Now He starts off in verse 6, “See to it you are not troubled.” This is an exhortation that takes time for us to look at in the Word and re-align to it. You know, I do not like a lot of the biblical narrative of the end times in the natural, though I believe it is the best; however, in my natural man I think, “I don’t like this!” and the Lord says, “It is okay that you don’t like it, but it is good, and it is a perfect plan.” And so, little by little, grow into it, little by little realign yourself to it, so that progressively as the pressure increases, the trouble or anxiety does not increase inside of you.

This is not a verse or exhortation that we can skip. We really need to develop relationships with fiery believers, not just believers, but with ones who are selling out and who are willing to pay whatever price that needs to be paid in order to be true to the Lord. It does not matter if you like the same music or the same entertainment or you have the same tastes in many things. If they are on fire for the Lord, we need to anchor our lives with one another to be in those conversations with people who are leaning into the Lord. That is a critical of not being troubled. I am just thinking that a lot of people would read verse 6 and say, “Okay, let’s go on to verse 7,” and I say, “What? Stop! Stop, this is a huge exhortation! Know the biblical narrative, know what is happening.”

Okay, now verse 7, and of course I have it edited on the power point screens here just to shorten it because many of you know these passages. I am wanting to highlight a point or two of each one of them which can easily be missed. He says in verse 7, “It is nation against nation” and we know that the Greek word is “ethnos”—ethnic group against ethnic group. Racial conflict, ethnic conflict, will explode more and more the closer we get to the Lord’s return.

There are twelve thousand different people groups in the earth as defined by different mission organizations. Some say fourteen thousand, but twelve is a good enough number, meaning there are not twenty or thirty. There are twelve thousand different groups. There are seven thousand languages so some of them have the same language, but they have some distinctives in their cultures and in their history and some of their values. Twelve thousand people groups. Part of the Lord’s plan is to allow those groups to walk out the deep darkness of their hearts, and He is going to give them room to do it. At the very same time that this is happening, there is a great spirit of revival coming in the John-17 supernatural family dynamic of supernatural unity of believers from all different backgrounds and all different styles and different points of view. We are coming into the John 17 unity, into a family unity. And at the same time, races are colliding with each other, twelve thousand people groups.

This is a problem that is going to escalate more and more and more. Some folks are very surprised by it, but it is mild today compared to what it is going to be in the future. I am not saying that so you say, “Oh no!” No, I am saying that for you to say, “Okay, okay, I need to really lean into what the Bible says about what is going to happen because if Jesus predicted these things, even though Satan is the author of many of the negative dynamics and man’s sin is contributing, however God in His sovereignty is allowing a lot of things to take place to create the optimum environment for the Church to be rescued from compromise and dullness and for the Great Harvest to come, a harvest of a billion new souls to walk in the fullness of the Spirit.

I mean, can you imagine a billion or two people walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit across the earth before the Lord returns? That is where it is going. That is the end game. That is what the Lord has in mind, and He says, as it were, “These pressures are going to create a lot of different responses in the earth.” So although the enemy’s actions and man’s sin are contributing greatly to these pressures, the Lord is giving more space to man’s darkness to allow it to create pressures that actually and ultimately create the perfect environment for the Church to be revived and for the Great End Time Revival to happen.

I do not like that, but it is going to happen; therefore I am not going to fret about it. I am going to lean into Jesus’ good leadership and say, “Okay, okay, Lord! When it is all said and done, it will all make sense, but just in the natural I do not like a number of these things.” Some people call it “gloom and doom preaching.” No, it is Jesus, and He is letting us know ahead of time, so we are not offended at His leadership. Because, if we watch the pressures increase little by little, we can acclimate to them, and we can shift our perspective little by little and adapt to it. We will say “Okay, we see what You are doing.” But if it suddenly just happened, it would take us by surprise and people would not be prepared to respond in a right way. However, we have to be intentional about responding. We cannot just say, “Well, you know, when it gets a little more intense, I will get more serious.” No, we have got to be really serious spiritually now to have spiritual vigor and strength, and lean into godly relationships now, because we are at the crossroads of human history right now. That is a dramatic statement, and many are making it. Now that does not make it right because many are making the statement, but it means that it is pretty self-evident right now.

Over the last twelve months, it is clear that we are at the crossroads of human history. I mean life on the planet will literally never ever be like it was before 2020, and I do not just mean Covid, because there are ten or fifteen things that are happening. One of the things that pressure does—and I do not like pressure—but one of the things it does is that it changes our conversations. Pressure changes what we talk to God about, and He knows that. Pressure changes what we talk to each other about. Pressure changes what we pray. Pressure changes how we dream about our future. Pressure changes what we talk about in our family. We change the songs we sing, the sermons we preach. Pressure creates a change of conversation at many levels and that opens the vents of our heart so to speak to tenderize us. Those new conversations and those new ideas actually change our emotions little by little if we lean into it.

So the optimum environment that the Lord is establishing is that He is allowing pressure in ten or fifteen different facets. He is increasing “Holy Spirit” activity, and He is raising up the body of Christ as a mature spiritual family in godly relationships. And so the pressure increasing, “Holy Spirit” activity increasing, and godly responses of individuals to the Lord increasing, those three components will transform the Church.

You know I would like not to have the pressure, and I have told the Lord and have made a joke of this—and it is mostly a joke but—I have told Him over the years, “Lord! I am not like those other guys! I do not need the pressure! I will obey You no matter what!”

And He says, “No, little guy, you are just like the other guys. Pressure makes you think differently and talk differently. It makes you plan differently, and you will spend money differently. You have conversations that are different. You talk to Me differently when you have pressure.”

And I said, “Yeah, I guess I am just like them.”

The human family—I am talking about the eight billion—is literally in the balance of how the body of Christ responds to Jesus’ leadership in these hours. Again, that is a big and dramatic statement. The human family on the earth is in the balance concerning how the millions of believers are responding to the Lord in this hour. Because the vast majority of the body of Christ—the billion in the earth, hundreds of millions of believers and tens of millions in America—are living under a spirit of dullness, compromise, and spiritual boredom. They do not have spiritual vitality and spiritual vigor, and they are not thriving in their spirit, in their walk with God.

Now the Lord is not mad at them, but He would say, “You are not prepared for what is coming.” He is saying, “Body of Christ, you really need to rise up in this hour.” This is not a sit-out hour. This is an hour where we need to be very intentional about a new level of consecration commitment.

It is an emotional effort to give ourselves to the Word even if it is not making sense to us and we cannot understand it. The Lord is saying, “You really do want to give yourself to this in a new way right now.” The analogy that I have been using the last year is that the body of Christ is now swimming against a one-mile-an-hour current. The current is increasing, and we are swimming against the current, and I am talking about the resistance that is coming against us in the culture and in the spirit where it is more difficult to stick with it, and it is a one-mile-an-hour current. Now, a one-mile-an-hour current takes a lot of effort to swim against. However, the issue is that it is going to increase to two-miles-an-hour. It is not going to go back to zero, it is going to go to two-miles-an-hour and then it is going to go to three-miles-an-hour. And, just using the analogy, it is going to be five-miles-an-hour one day. We will never be able to thrive when the current increases if we are not intentional in this hour about going deeper in God and going deeper in relationships with one another.

We are in an hour; we are in a global training season. It is not just America; you know that it is the earth. I am talking about the billion in the body of Christ, and of the billion in the body of Christ, hundreds of millions, the vast majority, are weighed down with spiritual dullness, spiritual darkness, spiritual boredom, compromise, here and there an issue or two or three where they are not obeying the Lord. They do not have a life in the Word. They love Jesus, they go to church, and they try to help a little bit and serve, but in their spirit, there is so much dullness. And the Lord is saying, as it were, “You are the darling of My heart, body of Christ in the earth, but you are not prepared for what is coming! The current is going to be intensified.”

This is not a good hour to be stuck in pornography, to get stuck in anger, bitterness, and slander. It is not a good hour to be comparing ourselves to one another or be addicted to entertainment or doing whatever the ten or twenty things I could put on the list. This is an hour to say, “Okay, I am stuck a little bit. Okay, okay, I am going to get serious. I am going to get serious at another level.” And that is what the Lord is saying right now, over these last twelve months.

The one-mile-an-hour is time to build spiritual muscles because it is going to go to two-miles-an-hour, and it is going to go to five-miles-an hour-eventually. And the body of Christ—most of it and even in our own midst here—most believers are gulping water right now and going down a little bit gasping, saying “I do not know if it is worth it! I do not know if it is worth it!” Well, it is worth it because the only other option is to throw away your weapons and just let the enemy destroy you. There is no other option, there is no cease fire in the spirit. And many people are like “I do not know if I can take it!” You cannot, we cannot take it. I do not like it and you do not like it, but we must build our spiritual muscles. And how to do it is not confusing.

We build our spiritual muscles by thousands of small, little decisions, little, God decisions for godliness. Thousands of small ones over the course of months and years. We build our muscles by choosing humility when we want to be defensive, by turning away from that issue to say no to it, little, small issues. We build our spiritual muscles by taking the time to build godly relationships. “Well, I do not really like those people. They are not really my style, they do not like my music, and they do not like my stuff.” No, get into relationships with people who are going hard after the Lord. And they don’t have to be the most cool people. Forget cool. Go for people who are going for God. You have to be in relationship, and not just for your safety. However, part of your safety is being a source of safety for them. There are a lot of things that will happen in your life when you are pouring into them. You are actually getting saved yourself by pouring into them.

A lot of folks think, “Well, that group is not that exciting. I don’t care for them, and I do not get much from them.” And so they sit on the sidelines relationally. I want to say it again: a lot of your spiritual safety is found in you pouring out to them. Their need draws you into an even deeper place with the Lord, and you will get delivered even by being the source that delivers them. And so, it is not about who is the most cool and who is this and who is that and the other. We have to be in godly relationships. We have to prioritize for it. We have to make time for it. It’s a critical thing for us to do.

We have to read the Word and talk to the Lord a little bit when we do it. We have to realign with His leadership when things are happening in the culture. There have been a lot of things these past twelve months, and we are saying “Augh!!!”

And the Lord would say, “Okay, realign with My leadership. Things are tough, I know, but find out what I am saying and what I am doing, and realign little by little to Me.” Those are the little, simple ways that we build spiritual muscles. If we sit out this season right now, it is not good because it is going to be two-miles-an-hour down the road not very far from now.

So I really want to encourage us during this 40-day fast. You know when we were all talking about doing this fast, we were saying, “Do we really want to do this? Lou gets so excited about these 40-day fasts! Why can’t he do 21-day fasts? I mean that is biblical too.” I am just having fun.

I was just with Lou by the way, just two or three days ago at Rick Joyner’s Round Table, and we had a ball together. The point I am saying is that I thought, “We **have** to do this!” I don’t mean you all have to fast forty days. That is not my point. But, we have to lean into this as a community in various ways and at various levels. We are the critical crossroads of human history right now. Everyone kind of thinks that, but it is more serious than most people are aware of because the fog is still dulling their discernment and they are not really aware of where the state of human history is right now and where we are on the divine calendar.

Beloved, it is game on! We are literally in the end-time scenario. It is not something a hundred years from now. I have said this for years, but I am more convinced than ever that there are many people alive on the earth today who will see the Lord’s return in their lifetime, people seated right now in this room. Meaning, the pressure is going to increase and so is the glory, but this is an hour where it is not “business as usual.” We have really got to go for this.

Now he says here in Matthew 24:7, “nation against nation”—ethnic group against ethnic group, the twelve thousand groups—famines, pestilence. There are more serious pestilences than Covid that are coming, more serious than this one. And whether this one is half true, half false, half this, half that—you know there are a hundred opinions, and that is not my point right now—My point is that there far more severe viruses, man-made and devil-made, coming to the earth. This is the most intense any of us have seen, but this will not be the most intense one when we look back over it some years from now.

I am thinking, “Augh! I do not like any of this!” and the Lord is saying, as it were, “Yes, but you have to understand what hour of history you are living in. These are the beginning of birth pangs.” Now the New King James says, “The beginning of sorrows.” Most translations say birth pangs and I do not know why the New King James says sorrows; the others say birth pangs or birth pains depending on the translation. The vast majority say birth pains.

Now the thing about birth pains as you know—contractions—is that the pressure gets more intense whilel the reprieves get shorter. Okay, so we are in a global birth pain right now with this Covid, the economics, and all of the very grievous movements towards globalization. They are exploiting the crisis as some of it is manufactured crisis, and in three or four other areas, not just in the economics and the Covid in order for globalism and totalitarian governments to take over. And it is like, “Augh, this is getting intense!”

Now some people read this passage, “the birth pangs,” and a lot of theologians will say, “Well, the birth pangs are general trends for two thousand years of history.” And so they are not really signs of anything. You ask a woman who has a baby if her birth pangs are clearly a sign that a baby is coming. She is extremely aware. She has not had birth pangs for seventeen or twenty-eight years. It is in those final days and hours, like, “Oh my goodness!” Someone said don’t say days, just say hours. Okay, I will take that back and prophesy over you “just in those few minutes.” Okay, how is that?

These birth pangs—I want to add a word: they are **global** birth pangs, meaning it is not that the civil war in the 1800s was a birth pang—They are pressures that the **earth** is leaning into and being pressured by together. They are global pressures, earthquakes that will cause global troubles and be headline news around the globe. So they are not just trends of two thousand years. They will dominate the global conversation for a little bit of time. And so they are global birth pangs because there is a global birthing that is happening. The birthing that these birth pangs are bringing is a new world order. There is a new world order called the Millennial kingdom with a resurrected King on a throne in Jerusalem and the whole earth becoming like the Garden of Eden in terms of its blessed conditions. That is what is being birthed with righteousness, love, and unity. Love and humility filling the earth–that is what is being birthed.

We are at the final hours of natural history, and I like to say natural history because history does not end when the Lord returns. Natural history with the devil’s involvement–that is what ends, not history itself. History goes on and on and on, and we are at the end of natural history. Jesus said, “There will be *global* birth pangs.” I am adding the word “global” but that is the context. Global birth pangs because there is going to be a global child born. A new world order with a King. They are not just trends of trouble for two thousand years that have no message in them. They are meant—the Covid and the economics related to it, and the economics that are going to become more and more intense—to dominate the global conversation. These are beginnings; these are birth pangs and not the big ones. I mean, they are very serious, and I take them seriously, but I look at this and the reprieves are going to get shorter and the Lord is saying, “I really want you to take this one-mile-an-hour season, this global training season in the body of Christ, to turn some things off, get rid of some things, reorder your time, get in right relationships, change your conversations, and begin to get into this narrative. Get into the God-story because that is the only place that there is going to be peace. And that is the only place that there is going to be freedom from the troubles.

Let’s go ahead and look at the next couple of verses in Matthew 24. You know all of this stuff, but I want to get it into our conversation. I have not said anything that is new in the last fifteen minutes, but I want this front and center of our conversations in this community, so that we are actually talking about this, and I do not mean panicked talking. We are saying that our God is about to transition the planet to the age to come! Cool! Our God is about to transform the billion-member body of Christ with a Laodicean spirit of compromise into a mature bride. Wow! That is cool!

Well, a mature bride means that we are living in unity with His leadership. There are so many implications. It is the greatest supernatural social miracle in history: the transformation of the end-time church in one generation. There is not social miracle anywhere close to that level. We are a part of it, but there is pain in it. I mean, there is no such thing as a clean birth. Births are bloody, and they are painful, but the result is amazing though it is painful and bloody. We wish it was not, but we really do not get to vote. The only thing that we get to vote on is if we are going to realign to His leadership day by day. Just little by little realign, realign, and see we are getting it! And the Lord would say, “You are getting it a little bit. Keep realigning it,” because as the pressure increases, the realignment increases. It is so kind of Him not to do it in one minute because it would be overwhelming as you cannot change your paradigms and deep heart decisions in one minute. It takes time even when we decide to do it. It still takes time to walk it out. And so the Lord is being very gracious right now.

Let’s go back to Matthew 24:8-14. I am reading verse 8. Again, this is the beginning of the birth pangs, but it is going to be more than earthquakes and pestilences and racial tensions, etc. “They are going to kill you,” Jesus said. “I want you to know the body of Christ, My people who are loyal to Me, will be killed in that hour,” not just in Communist China, but in the earth. In America, they will kill believers. It’s like “Okay, that has not happened yet,” but the Lord would say, “I have given you lots of warning that this is really going to happen.” When that bloodshed happens, there is something about bloodshed that galvanizes the human heart like nothing else does. The spilling of blood does something to the human heart like nothing else does. It enrages people, and we have seen some of the riots related to someone who has been killed unjustly. The police brutality in some of the black community has enraged whole populations. Or, when somebody dies for love and sheds their blood, it absolutely tenderizes and does something nothing else does. The Lord knows that, and He says, as it were, “That is painful, but that is going to be part of My plan, and I am going to allow that to happen.” That verse is so easy to read and just ignore because we don’t really know anyone that this has really touched in a personal way. I mean, there are a few of us who know somebody, but it is so rare today in the Western relational networks, etc.

“You will be hated by all nations.” Okay. That is for real. They are not just going to ridicule you on Facebook. They are not just going to censor you and cancel you on social media and with economic penalties. They will hate you and kill you. Not everybody, but enough people are going to be hated and killed in the body of Christ that it will get the attention of the whole body of Christ. Enough people are going to be killed and hated to the point where every believer will have to decide whether they are in or not. The Lord knows the perfect number, and He knows how many, but it will be enough to where you and I will have to decide, “Am I in at this level?” Well, if I am in at this level, I had better get rid of these three things because I need to have spiritual vitality. I am never going to make it if that happens. It may never touch me personally in that way, but I do not know if it will, and the Lord is not going to tell anybody. However, He is going to let it happen enough so that everybody has to reckon with it in a personal way. “If my children get affected, would I stand? Ohhhh! And I read that one story about that one family, but, I mean, **my** little sweetheart? Oh, I don’t know!” And the Lord is saying here, as it were, “I am giving you time to think it through. Am I worth it? Is the resurrection real? Are you really going to live for billions of years under My leadership in perfect glory?” Yeah. “Then it is worth it!” Yeah…until it knocks on my door! Then I will have to think about it again! And the Lord would say, “I am going to let you think about it for a while as it increases.”

They are going to betray, verse 11, deceive. So many false narratives! This deception, as I have said before, is social commentators giving false narratives. And I do not just mean the fake news, but way beyond that. There are so many false narratives, and there will be such confusion. People will just be perplexed and fearful. We have a perfect guide. We have a map called the Word of God. We have got to know it and have kingdom believers who are born again and who love Jesus. We all get on fire more and more together, we hang in there together, and we study the map, we realign to His leadership, and we are going to be good. It does not mean our life will be easy, but we will be spiritually safe. Our hearts will thrive even if our bodies are being challenged by various things. Our hearts will thrive. A lot of folks–when they think of safety, they think that nothing will trouble their lives. I like that, by the way. I like nothing troubling my life. I totally prefer that, and that will happen for billions and billions of years for me and for you, for billions and billions of years nothing will trouble your life. However, “safety” ultimately is spiritual safety. It means that your heart does not fall away. Your heart does not get offended. Your heart does not treat your enemies like they are treating you. And you stay in the divine narrative. You stay in the love of God. That is what spiritual safety is. The most dangerous thing on the planet is not for someone to kill you or take your money or cancel you with cancel culture and all of those things. The most dangerous thing on the planet is deception and our hearts going the wrong way. That is spiritual danger. That is by far the most dangerous thing.

Jesus talked far more about deception than He did persecution or tribulation. We read some of the narratives and biblical passages, and we think, “Persecution! Tribulation!” The Lord would say, “No, deception is by far the most dangerous thing that can touch you and your family.” Because if you get into deception and into a wrong narrative—and I do not mean that you are worshiping a false god from some Hindu or Eastern religion. That is not what I am talking about—I am talking about you buying into the false narrative of what is happening, and there are so many confusing narratives, and then you make wrong choices. And the wrong choices typically start with one or two steps, and five years later they are denying the Lord. Most people do not deny the Lord in their first step to the left or to the right, whatever, off the path. It is one or two more, and then one or two more. And then they are in conversations with a different group of people, and then they take another step or two, and then they have more people with wrong conversations, and then five years later they are saying, “I do not know if I believe anymore or if the Bible is even real,” and it started by inching in that direction with deception.

When I look at this spiritual family, I say “Lord!” I mean we are weak, we are broken, and we are not that great, but I tell you this is the best group of people on the earth that I want to be with. I mean, there are groups like this, but I would rather be in this group. Again, there are other groups like this in the earth, but I am just saying “Lord, we are going for it! We are not great at going for it, but we are going to hang in their together, and we are going to go for this thing! Augh!”

And lots of us—me, you—“Yes, I have the victory! But, really, when they knock on my door? Okay, okay!” Yet we are in a community that is saying “Yes,” and the community down the road and the one over there, they are saying yes too. I tell you we are blessed among men in the earth to have people like the people sitting next to you. You look at them and think, “Well, she bugs me a little bit.” Yes, and that is okay, but she is going hard after the Lord. “Well, she is not going that hard!” But she is in the posture to go hard, so just give her another minute or two! Okay? Just give her a break, and just give her a little bit more time.

The reason I am saying this is because I have talked about when I was at Rick Joyner’s round table with about thirty leaders who are involved in all of these things, and some other groups too as I have had lots of zoom calls in the five weeks I was gone. And I was talking and often I just said this because it came out of my heart. I just said, “I love our community! I love them. There is a big yes! I mean, we do not follow through that well, but we mean it. We mean it, and I would rather be a part of that group than any other group on earth!” And I said that a number of times, and I just thought I ought to say it to you and we ought to say it to each other. We ought to talk to each other, as that is the God-narrative of this family. And yes, there are things that we need to get better at, but there is a God-narrative, and I want to be a part of it.

Let’s look at Psalm 2 just for a minute, and we are going to look at this a couple of times. Isaac, I am going to have you come up here in just a couple of moments here. Psalm 2, we talk a lot about Psalm 2. Anyone who has hung around this community for a year or two, you have heard Psalm 2, you have heard Isaiah 19, but you might say, “I don’t really fully get it.” Well, I am going to give you the one sentence in Psalm 2. Psalm 2 is a prophecy that is, I believe, the most accurate chapter in the Bible for what is happening in the earth today. David gave this prophecy three thousand years ago, 1000 BC, when he was king of Israel.

In verse 1, he asked the question, “Why are the nations raging?” Right now the nations are ridiculing people who love Jesus and His word, and it is going to go from ridicule to rage. It is going to go from economic penalties to murder and prison. I mean not everybody, but it is going to be in our midst. David said, as it were, “Be sure of this: it is going to be rage!” It is not rage yet. It is getting more and more hostile, even in the last year, and the last ten weeks it is getting more hostile, but the hostility is going to be far beyond where it is now. Everyone is going to have to decide if they are into this Jesus of Nazareth or not. Is He a nice addendum to their life or is He their God? He is their magnificent obsession. He is what they are about, and He is worth it; no matter if we die, He is worth it. That is the resolve that the Lord is bringing to the surface for hundreds and millions of people who are in that personal dialogue.

Look here what happens in verse 2. “The kings”—that is the heads of state—“the rulers”—the rulers are not just political leaders; they are the heads of the entertainment, heads of technology, heads of athletics, heads of academia, heads of the marketplace and the big business. They are the leaders of the culture. David said that there is coming a time where the heads of state will get with the main leaders in the culture, and they will have one desire in their working together. Because kings do not work together; they have treaties, and when they make their treaty and go back home, they try to break the treaty without getting caught. Kings do not work together, not really. They smile a little bit on this one project for a little while, but they are always trying to beat the system. The rulers who are the most powerful people in the military, athletics, academia, media all those areas, you know those, they are working together. They are planning to stand against the Lord, and here is their word in verse 3. Most of you know this, but not all of you do, and I want you to get it. Verse 3, they want to drive the influence of the Word of God out of the culture entirely. Now it does not say the Word of God, but they describe the Word of God in a horrific way. They describe the Word of God as bondage; they want to break God’s bonds off the people. And boy, that is happening with intensity! But it is only the beginning of the beginning. They see the Word of God as bondage. They see the old fashioned, archaic, old biblical morality as outdated. “Come on! Get with it! We are never going to enter into our full human potential spiritually, sexually, or in any way if we are stuck by these archaic, out-of-date laws that nobody really believes anyway. Let’s not get rid of the word of God only. Look, let’s break the Word of God and smash it!”

I mean, look at the language. They want to cast away the cords that are binding them: the sanctity of life, the sanctity of sex, the sanctity of marriage. They want to cast it out of the culture entirely. Now there has always been a little bit of this since David said it three thousand years ago, but never have the kings of the earth and the leaders of the culture worked together to drive the Word of God out of their culture. Here is the reason why: it implies it has to be a Christian nation to break the Word of God off the people. I mean, in David’s day, his nation was the only nation with the Word of God. There were not other kings who had the Word of God in their culture. Three thousand years later, many nations have Christian heritages—some faint, some strong—and so this is an end-time prophecy. Do not miss what is happening. They are not just wanting to get rid of it; they want to break it and shatter it with rage. That is what is mounting up in front of us right now. They are going to make it well known. They are doing it right now, but in the last ten weeks? Wait for two years from now. Wait for ten years from now. This prophecy is on! It is on in the last five years like it has never been on in history. It is accelerating so fast.

Now I am not saying this so that we say, “Oh no! Oh no! Oh no!” I am saying this so we say “Okay, okay, it is a one-mile-an-hour current, and it is going to go to two-miles-an-hour in a minute. You know what? I have to start doing my spiritual push-ups. I have to start reading the Word more.” And I am not talking about hours and hours a day. “I am going to start talking to God over the Word. I am going to make some decisions for humility, some decisions for kindness and mercy. I am going to make some decisions about my money. I am going to make some decisions about how I spend my time. I am going to have different conversations. I am going to talk to God differently. I am going to start doing a few push-ups every day, not many, just a few. And I am going to start making more of those little decisions.”

I am telling you, the kings of the earth are going to use the legal system, the justice system, to break the Word of God off the culture in this nation. That is what is on their mind. They want to make hate speech a criminal offense with economic penalties. I mean crimes against the state, and they are going to call believers “domestic terrorists.” This horrifying thing that has just passed Congress yesterday or the day before, the “Equality Act,” it is all over the news. Now it is going to pass the Senate. The Senate is fifty-fifty now with Kamala Harris as the tie-breaker, but three republicans voted in the house for this “Equality Act.” I mean, this “Equality Act” is horrific, horrific. They are going to force every public school system in America to teach every seven-year-old—just picking that age out of the hat because it will be all of the ages—about the transgender agenda, to make decisions about their identity, their sexual identity. They are going to have full involvement with films and talks and data for seven, eight, nine and ten-year-olds.

There will be parents who say, “I am not going to have my kid in that,” and this is where it is going. They are already saying this in other nations. They are whispering it, but it is actually in the news that they will take the child out of your home because you are raising up a hatemonger. They will say, “If we do not take that child out of your home, when that child is twenty-two, they will be a problem in society. They will be a hater like you are!” They are going to be taking children out of homes, and they are doing that just ever so slightly right now. They are whispering it now around the world in various places, but that is where it is going.

They are going to shut down any school that will not teach this agenda. It is going to affect the classroom and the restaurants. There will be social credit scores related to it. It is intense, and it is game on! It is the hour where we have to decide. It is not the first time, but it is the hour where we have to answer, “Are we in this all the way or not? Is He who He says He is? Is He really a resurrected Man who is coming back to the planet, and we are going to have resurrected bodies and live in eutopia forever, and our choices in this age is going to affect our life in that age? Is that real? Is that a cool sermon or do I actually buy it?” Will I buy it if I lose my money and my blood is shed? If my family gets harmed, will I buy it?”

Oh my goodness, this is intense because we have been nurtured on the gospel of the American dream for the last hundred years or whatever the number is in America. We mostly think of Jesus through the lens of “If our money increases, our friends increase, our health increases, if our comfort increases,” then we think His leadership is good. If those things and if promises are delayed and things get hassled with, we start to think, “Well, Lord, I love You, but come on! Come on!” and the Lord is saying, as it were, “I am trying to make your spirit vibrant and strong. I want you to thrive spiritually! I will give you some of those things, but it is not mostly about that. I am wanting you to make choices that will affect your life forever. Choices now that will have eternal value, and you do not make them on your own. I am going to let the pressure build, and for you to even witness it in others to make you think, ‘Wow, this is getting up close and personal! I think I have to make choices if I am really into this. Lord, I have got to start talking to You more if I am really into this!’”

Well Revelation 3. Here is my second warning, Isaac; the first one went unheeded. Isaac, get ready to come on up. I just want to give you Revelation 3 and have him come up right after that. You know it, and I want to unpack this way more than just a quick run-by. Revelation 3, Jesus said “You are lukewarm. You are wretched. You are miserable. You are poor, and you are blind.” He means spiritually wretched. He does not mean that their life is wretched externally. “You are spiritually miserable. You are bored with Jesus and the eternal Word of God. You and His Spirit in you rarely talk to each other. You are spiritually blind. You are spiritually naked, but you are the darling of My heart, and I am coming after you! I am not leaving you to yourself!” Verse 18 “I want you to buy gold from Me. I have gold to give you!” Of the seven churches of Revelation was the Laodicean church was the church with the most horrible description, but they were given the greatest promises. I mean, it is remarkable. The worst description but the greatest promises. It is amazing, and Jesus said “I will give you gold. I will give you gold. I will give you gold.”

He says in verse 19, “I am only rebuking you because I love you so much. I want to wake you up. I want you to be zealous. I do not want you to draw back from three areas here or there. I want you to go all the way for Me!” All the way zealous! All the way living in kindness and the God narrative and blessing your enemies and generosity and all those Sermon on the Mount things that get intense when they get up close and personal.”

Then it says in verse 20 “I will dine with you!” That is, “I want to have meals with you. I want to be close to you. I will thrill your heart. You do not even know how capable I am to thrill you.”

And then we are going to talk about this in the weeks to come, Stuart said it last week; it is the John 13-17. We were going to do this on Friday nights. Jesus gave His greatest teaching, those five chapters in John 13-17. He has a meal with them, and He is actually dining with them, and He is giving them the gold in the chapters after that meal. The gold refined by fire is John 14, 15, 16, 17. It is that reality, and He is going to usher the body of Christ into that reality. That is the reality that is going to equip us to thrive spiritually in the midst of intense pressure. Because we are going to live in that reality.

John 13-17 is a cool chapter, but mostly we just talk about it and then move on. It has not, in my opinion, rarely ever been unpacked in a deep way. Probably—I am just guessing making up this number—about one percent of the body of Christ over two thousand years of Church history has walked in John 13-17 regularly. It is the most glorious chapter. And how could it be possible that just one percent or less? And the Lord is saying, as it were, “No, it is—watch! I have a surprise—it is the gold of the end-time Church. This is the reality and the truths and the experiences that I am going to bring My bride into, and she will thrive!” I mean, this is the gold right here. This is the meal He is having ahead of time with the disciples, laying out the gold before them.

And so, I like to call John 14-17the family dynamics within the Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit and how they interact with each other. And what Jesus is saying, in effect, “The way We interact, I am going to cause My Church to interact with Us the way We interact with Us. You are going to interact with Me like I interact with Me and with the Father and with the Spirit. And not only that, you are going to interact with each other this way.” And this is not going to be a one percent of the body of Christ for two thousand years. This is going to be the conversation and the glory of the end-time Church.

In John 14, He lays out access to God’s heart and that we are actually invited into that intimate dialogue. This is not just a sermon this is real. This is real.

John 15, Stuart said this last week, and I loved it, John 15: you have to cultivate this in your individual life actively. It will not just fall on you; it has to be cultivated.

John 16 is what the Spirit promises to do in the midst of hostility. There are going to be enemies and hatred, and He is going to do these things in power through the Church.

John 17: the ultimate supernatural relational glory of us living that way with God and with one another in the midst of a hostile world.

Beloved, this is the gold: John 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. And I mean this intimate interaction of the Father and the Son, and He is going to let us do it with Him and then with one another, and the earth is going to be shocked by it. The earth is going to say, “This is another order!” And then we are going to live forever in this reality!

Well, amen and amen! Let’s stand.