

Why Are We Told What Will Happen Before It Happens■

by James Jennings

This sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's foreknowledge and care, highlighting how Jesus foretold events to strengthen the faith of His disciples. It explores the concept of prophecy and the significance of believing in Christ's words as words of life and truth. The message encourages listeners to have a deeper acquaintance with Christ, to trust in His sovereignty even in the face of trials, and to find assurance in the fulfillment of God's promises.

Scripture: John 6:70, John 13:19, Luke 22:31, 1 Corinthians 14:1, 1 Corinthians 14:39, Luke 22:64, Joshua 23:14

Topics: "Trust in God's Sovereignty", "The Power of Prophecy"

Description

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Transcript

This morning, I'm not going to keep preaching on Psalm 23. My third message, I'm going to give that at another time. But I want to share in part what the Lord gave me to share out there in Martha at Valentine Community Church.

So let me pray, and then we will start. Father, Lord, I thank You for being with us today. Thank You for being with us to the end of the age.

Thank You for being with us, Lord, on the days that are hard and difficult and trials, and the days that we have such a felt sense of Your nearness. Lord, You do not leave us, You do not forsake us, and we're so grateful for Your love. And I pray that You would help me even now to bring forth something from Your Word that would be an encouragement to these precious sheep of Yours, and even to my own soul as I speak on this.

Lord, quicken it again to me, that it would feed my own soul. And so Lord, we just look to You and ask for Your blessing. In Christ's name, Amen.

So let me start with a question, which will kind of get to the heart of what I want to look at today and emphasize to you from the Word of God. How many of you would prefer to know about something before it took place? That when it does take place, it'd make it easier, because you knew it was going to happen. Someone told you it was going to happen.

It would at least give you more time to prepare for whatever it is. Now, I don't know how you'd answer that question. I think most of us, if we could know what was ahead of us, it could seem to be a help to us.

I was thinking about death. Death. People say that cancer is a merciful way to die.

And they mean it's merciful, not in that it's not difficult for the one riddled with cancer, but it's merciful towards that person's family, because they're not just taken in a car wreck, they're not just found dead. You have a period of months by which you can spend with them as they're dying. You're preparing as it's taking place as they're going to die.

The military. They love knowing what's going to happen before it takes place, right? And we have entire branches of military intelligence. And they're trying to figure out what is the enemy's next move going to be.

Because that's really to our advantage to know that. It should help us to prepare. That's why we have all this spying taking place.

We want to know what incoming attack is going to happen. We want to prevent casualties, right? Don't you want to prevent casualties? If a thousand people are going to die, and we can get information to prevent that from happening, or at least attempt to prevent that from happening, you tend to think that's a good thing. You want that.

You want that information. This is also the similar principle behind the weather channel. Now, the weather channel is not as successful as military intelligence.

Now, they were correct yesterday. When they told us that it was going to be 105 degrees yesterday, I'm taking it, you didn't get your long-sleeved shirt on, and your jeans, and your wool coat, and you went out planning to do a building project in the middle of the heat of the day. Or maybe you did.

Maybe you did because it builds some character in you and your children. Say again? Yeah, lose weight, yeah. There's some benefits.

But that's the idea of the weather channel. We want to know what's going to happen before it takes place so we can prepare. So we can prepare.

If hell is going to come down, we can prepare and put our car in the garage, right? Try to prevent it from getting damaged. Now, how well you and I do with the information that we are given about what will take place, as much as we might try to prepare and take advantage of that information, even if it's certain, the information that we have, often, what happens? We know what's going to take place, and often we still fail to respond in a way that you think if you would know what's going to happen, you would respond better. That's even a reminder here of how weak we are.

Often, it's when the rubber of the car hits the road. When push comes to shove, we flesh these things out, and the implications of what we heard was going to happen were tested with it. Kind of like Jeff has

mentioned many a time with the death of their son John, and he died at 19.

It tested Jeff's knowledge of the sovereignty of God experientially. I know God is sovereign. Now that something has happened, am I going to believe what I already know to be true? You work that out.

The rubber of the tire met the road. Here, another question is, when someone tells you something that will take place and it does, what does that do to your perspective about them? Let's say the weather person, they get it right for a whole year. Every day, they were specific to the degree to the hour of what the weather was going to be like.

What would that do to you? What weather channel would you be watching? The other guys are that person. That person. There's a sense that they know what's going to take place.

Same thing with military. If you've got someone in the agency who really can find out what's going to happen with the terrorists ahead of time, you start to build confidence in them and their ability and their perspective. You realize their word, it's trustworthy, that you can trust it, and that when they say something and it happens, it again and again affirms to you their character as being one who has discernment and perception to foretell what was going to happen.

So, with that said, turn to John 6. Let's go to John 6. We're going to find a statement here Christ gives. The disciples of something that will take place in the future. And I believe, and I'm going to try to prove to you, He gives this statement so that when it does happen, it will not shake, undermine, sabotage, or disable their faith in Him.

But instead, knowing of this future event will cause them, or at least it should, cause them to believe in Him more and have more confidence in what He has spoken. In other words, I want you to see that the Lord Jesus Christ, your Great Shepherd, He says certain things out of great concern for you, for me, for every Christian. He tells us certain things in order to help us to keep on believing.

He speaks about things before they take place at different points because He cares for you and I in such a way that He wants us to keep on believing and He's helping us. He's guarding us. And I believe we find one of these things here in John 6. Now, we're not going to read the whole chapter, just starting in v. 60.

John 6. When many of His disciples heard it, the it being He just said He's the bread that came down from heaven, unless you eat His flesh, you're going to perish. When many of His disciples heard this thing that they were disputing about, they said, this is a hard saying. Who can listen to it? Jesus' response, Jesus knowing in Himself that His disciples were grumbling about this, He said to them, do you take offense at this? That I came down from heaven, that I am the bread of life, that you must eat me or you will perish, that I am the one who draws you and pulls you to Myself? Then He says, then if you're offended at this, then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending? Meaning, if you don't even believe I came, what if you're there when I ascend in Acts 1? Even then, is that really going to help? V. 63, no, it's not.

It's the Spirit who gives you life. The flesh, seeing a man raised from the dead, whatever it is, that is no help at all in the end in the big scheme of things. It's no help at all.

V. 64, but there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe and who it was who would betray Him. He knew that.

He knew something. He already knew something before it takes place. V. 65, and He said, this is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it's granted Him by the Father.

V. 66, after this, many of His disciples, they turned back. They no longer walked with Him. So Jesus said to the twelve, do you want to go away as well? Simon Peter answered Him, and we don't know how long between the question and the answer and the answers on behalf of all the twelve.

Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God. Now this is incredible so far. If you catch this, thousands have forsaken the Lord.

Many who were just there for the bread and the signs and the miracles, and they weren't there for the Christ to feast and be satisfied on Him. They leave. They're calling what Christ says hard.

They're grumbling. They're disputing about what He is communicating. It's offending them.

And there's this apostasy happening. And then Jesus' response, He is a Christ who wants no unwilling followers, and so He looks out at those who are left, and He asks them, what do you desire? Do you want to continue on with Me? And some time maybe happens before the response or maybe it's instantaneous, and Peter on behalf of the twelve expresses, no, there's nowhere else to go. You have the words of eternal life.

We've come to know this. What an encouragement, at least it seems to be what's happening here. We're going to talk about that in a minute.

That Peter's response is, how do you think Christ would now respond to this? You just had this man, after mass apostasy, express commitment to keep on. How would you then expect the man who never misspoke a word? The man who had words on a golden platter fit in every conversation he ever had? How does he respond? Verse 70, Jesus answered them, did I not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil? That's my dilemma this morning. That's what I want to think about.

Verse 70, He spoke of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him. So did you catch it? There's a military intelligence report happening from the Christ. Mass apostasy is happening.

Men are expressing their commitment. And here this intelligence is being given. One of you is a devil.

One of you is a devil. He's saying this is going to happen. You see, the author even says that in verse 71, right? He's recording this.

Jesus spoke of Judas. Why? For He was going. He was going to betray Him.

It's going to happen in the future. The author's writing it after it's happened. He already knows it's happened.

Christ is speaking it before it has happened. He's letting them know this is going to happen. He's informing them, that is, those who are committed to Him, that even though He just talked about choosing them and no one come in unless the Father draws, He lets them know, yes, I chose you, the twelve.

Yet one of you is a devil. One of you is diabolical. Now, would they have suspected that Judas was diabolical and a devil? Right, we expect it.

They would not have expected this. And let's briefly just prove that. This is not something they would have expected.

Even in Luke, when this is brought up again, this is a repeated theme about one is going to betray. This is a prophecy, even that we see first spoken in Psalm 41 and it's speaking about Anahithophel betraying David, yet it's ultimately pointing to Judas betraying the Christ. But Luke 22, when Christ brings this up, they begin to question one another.

And they all turn and they look at Judas and say it's him. Is that what happened? They all began to question one another which of them it could be was going to do this. They didn't know.

They didn't perceive. Who's this going to be? Who's going to do this? After all, what was Judas' job? What was one of his jobs? He was the treasurer. Right, John 12, when he was frustrated at the woman wasting the ointment and they could have sold it to give to the poor, that's how he made himself appear.

The author records that no, he didn't say that because he cared about the poor. He said it because he was a thief. And it says, having charge of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into the money bag.

So this is the treasurer, the one in charge of the money. And who put him in charge? The Christ. Who knows he's going to betray Him? The Christ.

Who makes a vague statement in John 6 about one of you is going to betray Me and doesn't say who it is? The Christ. Obviously, he couldn't say who it was right then. If he would have specifically called them out, then they would have done something about it.

And Judas had a purpose even in this to fulfill the ultimate plan of God. So there's an insider, a tool of the devil within their own ranks who's not left when all the others left. And I want to prove to you that Jesus' words in John 70 are actually meant for you and I's encouragement.

For our encouragement. Not as an extra challenge to their response of, Lord, we want to follow you. But actually, Him preparing them for what is going to happen in the future so that when it does take place, it will not undermine their faith.

And they will keep on believing the Lord by being reminded of what He has previously spoken. So here it is, the man full of the Spirit without measure. The man, Christ Jesus, giving this intelligence report.

Speaking all of these sayings that are prophetic throughout His ministry. Even saying of things that happened hundreds of years earlier and fulfilling those very things in His one perfect life. He fulfilled one prophecy after another.

Now, you might not be convinced that the purpose of verse 70 is that this is actually an encouragement. And one of you might even say this. You might say, well, James, I recall your sermon in 2016 on John 6 where you said in regards to verse 70, quoting you, you said this, James, you said, you think Jesus would rather respond to encourage Peter, yet He doesn't.

Rather, He challenges them yet again. I said that in 2016. I think I was wrong.

I think I didn't see this in its fuller context to interpret it as exactly what was behind what Christ is saying. Let's think of that. Was Peter's confession in verse 67 a boastful confession where he was swelling up with pride and thus Christ rebuked him? Look at v. 68.

Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Peter's not taking Christ aside and rebuking Him. He's just responding to what Christ has asked Him. He's asked them.

Is there something here that is Peter being full of pride? We do know when Christ spoke about His sufferings in Matthew 16, what response did He get from Peter there? Peter took Him aside and rebuked Him. And what did Jesus say to Peter? Get behind Me, Satan. Your mind is not set on the things of God, but on the things of man.

Is that what's happening here? Or is Peter genuinely answering Christ's question that he was asked? Do you want to go away as well? Is Peter genuinely responding to that? Or is something wrong with Peter's response and that causes Christ to reprove him? Is this an encouragement or a rebuke? I realize rebukes are even used to encourage in the end, right? But what's happening? Is Jesus saying to them as B.B. Warfield believes, that it is not ye that have believed, but I that have chosen you? Or Warfield goes on to say, had Peter known Christ fully, he never would have or could have confessed Him only thus with a boastful spirit as if he had found Christ out instead of having been found by Him. With half-hearted zeal as if He were only the best He had yet found, and with a somewhat selfish outlook as if He were only because He could obtain from Him satisfaction for His felt needs. Is that what Peter's doing? Is Warfield right? Can you see that? Is that in Peter's response? And is Christ challenging him and reproofing them more in a hard Titus 2 way? Rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith.

Is that Titus 1? I think it's Titus 2. So is Christ reproofing Peter for not clearly articulating Christ's sovereignty in His salvation that He just taught on? Is that what's happening? That's what Warfield believes he sees in these words here when Peter says, we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy God. He thinks Christ is turning around and saying, didn't I choose you? As if Peter was supposed to respond, oh Lord, You chose us. And not talk about Him believing? Or is Christ encouraging Peter that amidst His sovereignty, He has even chosen one to be a disciple who will betray Him, so that being warned ahead of time when this happens, even though it looks like one is lost, Christ said, I will not lose one, except the son of perdition that it might be fulfilled.

Is He reminding them of this future event in order to strengthen them? Is Peter's confession that was given on behalf of the twelve genuine? And in order to keep them when a later trial happens, Christ comes and He makes this statement to them? Is He giving military intelligence to the inner circle that one of them is corrupt and going to betray them so that when it happens, they will keep on believing Him? Is that what's happening? Does the Lord even do something like that? Does He care about us that much to tell us things ahead of time so that when they take place, He knows that if we have that knowledge or that verse or that thought about His character, if we know it ahead of time when it takes place, we'll be able to have that as a bedrock of confidence and trust in the midst of whatever trial that happens. Now, turn to John 13. I think this is where we get a very clear answer.

I hope it's clear to you. We find Christ speak again specifically about these two topics that He chose them and about someone betraying Him. And thankfully, He clearly states the purpose behind why He is again telling them this statement.

So I take what He says in John 13 and that illuminated my own understanding of John 6-70 to realize I think this is exactly what His purpose here is. He's not reproving them with their statement. Nothing was wrong with Peter's statement.

He's actually encouraging them all the more. John 13, verse 18. I am not speaking of all of you.

I know whom I have chosen. Right? Same thing. He said who He had chosen in John 6. But, the Scripture will be fulfilled.

He who ate My bread has lifted his heel against Me. Why do you keep bringing up Judas? Answer, verse 19. I mean, it's right there.

I'm telling you this now. Why? Before it takes place. Why? That when it does take place, what's going to happen? You may believe that I am He.

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the One I send receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives the One who sent Me. I'm telling you this now so that when it does take place, it's going to happen. A prophecy is going to be fulfilled and one of you is going to betray Me and he's going to lift his heel against Me.

And when that happens, don't be surprised by it. I know that was going to happen ahead of time. And I'm telling you, before it takes place so that when it does take place, you may believe Me.

Your faith won't be sabotaged. It won't be undermined. You won't hear about the Christ who's going to lose none and say, here, He lost one.

No, rather, that Christ has said that one will become an apostate. That is going to happen. It should all the more encourage and strengthen your faith that He is a Christ who keeps His Word.

I find this incredible. Christ at multiple points has been telling them future events ahead of time in order to help them when that event is fulfilled. And like I said, I always took John 6.70 to be Christ being strong and corrective with Peter.

And oh, He was strong and corrective at times when it was exactly the response that was being denied. Again, John 6.44, He had just said, no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws Him and I will raise Him up on the last day. Is that true? Why didn't Judas get raised up on the last day when he became an apostate? You know what's going to enter into your mind right when you start to question Christ's power because of Judas' apostasy? It's going to enter into your mind that Christ said it would happen.

And you're going to all the more believe the Christ. Not doubt Him. Not question His integrity.

Not question His sincerity of everything that He spoke. But all the more affirm it. Judas' apostasy actually all the more affirms Christ's Word is true.

I mean, Christ even knew of One among Him who was going to betray Him, and He allowed it to happen as He went to the cross. Who does that? Someone who wants to do the will of their Father. And that's exactly what Christ did.

This shouldn't cause us to question the Lord. In a way, Peter has just expressed, Lord, we are committed to You. And Christ is saying I am committed to You.

I am. I have chosen You, the Twelve. And yet, I'm so committed to You, I want You to know one of You is a devil.

And I'm telling you this, before it takes place or when it does take place, you will keep on believing and trusting in Me. In John 17, verse 12, Jesus' High Priestly Prayer, He says to the Father, while I was with them, I kept them in Your name, which You have given Me. I have guarded them.

And not one of them has been lost except the Son of Destruction that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. I have guarded them. And look, He's left the Spirit.

And we're kept by the power of God. You and I are being guarded for salvation, being preserved for salvation. To the end, this is the Lord, His care for us.

And one way He guards us is by telling us what's going to happen ahead of time, so when it does take place, we won't doubt Him. Now, some will object in John 13 and say, well, the phrase says that you may believe implying they currently don't believe. I don't think that's what's happening there.

We find consistent expressions of faith by the disciples, and yet what we find is a consistent progression of more and more trust and commitment and understanding in the Christ. Just as with Christ and His life, we find Him more and more fulfilling prophecy. As Christ is more and more making His way to the cross and fulfilling prophecy, He's as much Christ before it's all been completed.

And so with the disciples, they're more and more understanding more and more who the Lord is. And what He's saying here is that you'll believe, meaning there's going to be further confirmation in your mind as you look at My present act of obedience and fulfilling of all these things. There's going to be further confirmation that I am He.

There's going to be one less reason for you to doubt. And Jesus had to get to the cross and say it's finished. And He had to raise from the dead.

And He had to ascend. He had to do all of that, and He has. He's accomplished it all.

Where else is there a classic example of this truth we're looking at? About Christ telling something before it takes place, so when it does take place, you might believe Him. Peter. Peter.

Flip to Luke 22. I mean, this is the Lord that we've got, brethren. Psalm 23, one of the next verses I'm going to have is He restores my soul.

I mean, this is all even a testimony of that, of Him restoring and keeping His people. Luke 22 and 31. Peter's not yet denied Christ.

He hasn't denied Christ yet. And verse 31, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you that he might sift you like wheat. And what's Christ say? But I've prayed for you that your faith... that's the issue, you and I's faith not failing.

I've said this before it takes place. When it does take place, you may believe. I've prayed for you that your faith may not fail.

And when you have turned again... Wait, since He just said when you've turned again, what's that imply He knows is going to happen to Peter? First that he's going to fail, and then He's even prophesying and speaking that Peter is going to turn again before the guy's even fallen. And you're a Peter hearing this. When you've turned again, go have a pity party for five years.

No, strengthen your brothers. Peter said to Him, Lord, I don't understand what You're saying. I'm so proud and full of myself.

Lord, I'm ready to go with You both to prison and to death. Jesus said to him, I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day until you deny Me three times that you know Me. Jesus tells Peter about this before it takes place.

And He tells him ahead of time. He's praying for him that his faith not fail. And then, He tells him you're going to rise again.

You're going to turn. I mean, when you're Peter and you go and fall, and then what happens? He looks and he gets eye contact with Christ and he goes away and he weeps bitterly. There you're weeping bitterly.

Think of the encouragement that you can have this thought. Wait a minute! He said I would turn and rise again. What? I mean, what an encouragement.

How could your faith fail there? I'm going to rise up. I'm going to follow Christ. And brethren, the way this Christ treats this sheep here, don't think this is some far thought that is just beyond you.

We have a great high priest whose name is love. Whoever lives and intercedes for you and I. And He's the one praying for you that your faith may not fail. And He's the one who's wanting you to turn again.

You might have fallen into some depression and self-pity and unbelief, and then this spark of hope comes and you believe the words of Christ. He wants you to rise up and turn again and not just serve yourself, but go strengthen the brothers. Serve others.

Doesn't it mean this is incredible? The way Christ is in the midst of all of this. And again, this is just an example of the Lord being our Shepherd. And brethren, how we need such a Shepherd, right? For even when Peter hears it, as clear as anything, there's a trial coming and he's going to deny Christ.

Guess what happens? He still does it. I mean, you and I might know something's going to happen before it takes place, that we're going to suffer as Christians, and then it starts happening. You start suffering as Christians, and guess what? You don't respond as well as you perceived you would respond even though you knew it was going to happen.

And that reminds us of our utter weakness. I mean, the disciples heard about Jesus' death again and again and again, and yet they didn't entirely comprehend what was going to happen. And you could say, well, yeah, we're not like them.

We understand better than they do. Brethren, there's probably things in this book, in the Word of God, that has been spoken about the trials and the sufferings and the things that you and I are going to go through, and you're sitting here and I'm sitting here thinking, oh yeah, we know what that's talking about. We don't.

So if the disciples didn't, who are we to say that we truly comprehend and understand that to its fullest extent? We need, obviously, more humility. The Bible tells us in 1 Peter 4.12, to not be surprised at the fiery trials that come upon us to test us as though something strange were happening to us. But when those trials come to rejoice as we share in the sufferings of Christ, and yet how often we are surprised by the trials, even though we've been commanded, do not be surprised.

That shows our weakness. Luke 24, some of those who were with them went to the tomb and they found it just as the women had said, but if you're turning there, Luke 24.24, yeah, we're right there. You can turn there.

Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but Him they did not see. And He said to them, look at Him, He says to them, O foolish ones and slow of heart. Don't you hate the slow of heart disease? I don't like having that.

I'm okay if my body gets slow, my rotator cuff is just sore every day. That's okay. You know what I don't want to happen? I don't want to be slow in heart.

To do what? To believe all that the prophets spoke. Brethren, the New Testament is one fulfillment of prophecy after another. It's one fulfillment again and again of something spoken 600 years ago being fulfilled exactly as it was spoken.

Which is an affirmation to you and me that this is the Christ, and even Judas coming to betray, that was spoken about. And that should strengthen our faith, not make us question the Lord at all. But God, help us to not be slow in heart.

He says right there in Luke 24, it was necessary that the Christ should suffer. What's He doing? He's reminding them of something He had previously had said. He's spoken to them.

They're slow in heart. He keeps talking about His suffering. They don't get it.

Peter to the point where, no, Lord, don't do that. Don't go there. Get behind Me, Satan.

They were struggling to believe. So what are you being slow to believe this morning? What are you being slow to believe? I hope at this point in this message, you recognize Christ has given you zero reasons to be slow to believe Him. Zero reasons to be slow to believe His Word.

And you'd be amazed if we made a list of everything He has spoken about that is going to happen to you and I as Christians, and if you had that list and you compared it to your life, you would start to see all the boxes are slowly getting checked and these things are happening in your life. And it shouldn't be a surprise. The trials that happen, they might not have been foretold as specifically as Judas' betrayal, but more broadly, it was spoken in the Word.

And He spoke this to you to prepare you that when it happens, you would believe. You would be more and more confirmed. Isn't that the point of prophecy? 1 Corinthians 14, the one who prophesies and He speaks to people for their what? For their what? Upbuilding, encouragement, and consolation.

Have I not chosen you, the twelve, yet one of you is a devil? I believe Christ spoke that, as you see from John 13, for their encouragement, upbuilding, and consolation. That they would believe. That they would keep on believing.

When Paul says in Acts 20, 23, that the Holy Spirit testifies to me that in every city, imprisonment and afflictions wait. Whatever's happening there for Paul, that's for His encouragement. He knows what's going to happen before it takes place.

So that when it does take place, he's not surprised. He's all the more trusting the Lord. Even when he said later in Acts 20, 29, he said, I know that after my departure, I know it might happen.

He said, I know after my departure, fierce wolves will come in among you guys at Ephesus. And when he says among yourselves, he's talking about the eldership there, will come in among you not sparing the flock. And from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things to draw away the disciples after them.

And as I looked at the church history of Ephesus last year, you'll find out that exact thing happens. You see it in 1 Timothy. You see it in Revelation.

You see what happened to Ephesus. They weren't entirely prepared even though Paul said it was going to happen. But you could look back and you could see these people who came in speaking heresies and you could find a sense of comfort in it.

I mean, look, there's all these denominations today. There's all this heresy out there. Does that bother you? Does that make you discredit Christ? Oh, how could He allow all this apostasy? He spoke of it happening.

That all of that should affirm to you His Word is true. There should not be a place to doubt. But we find this again and again.

John 14, I'm going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. And now I've told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, when I do go, when Judas betrays, when I die on the cross, I've told you before it takes place that you might believe. Prophecy being fulfilled. Christ telling you beforehand what's going to take place is meant to upbuild and encourage and console you in the faith so that you won't lose heart in the midst of the battles that we are promised to face as Christians.

John 16, I have said these things to you, that when the hour comes, you may remember that I told them to you. Remember. Remember.

I told them to you. So, how does this apply to you and I? Well, I trust first you see that we have a God who knows all things even before they take place. Those were not if, and, or, maybe.

Those were not maybe statements. I told you this before it takes place, so when it does take place, you may believe. That's an absolute assertion.

It's going to happen. So that tells you, since he made that statement there and he made it all over the Bible and all these prophecies are fulfilled, it tells you you can trust that God knows all things even before they take place in your life. That's why we sing that song, whatever my God ordains is right.

So what happens in your life and my life, we know, even apostasy is brought about by God and we can trust Him in the midst of it. And even in our own struggles with fear like Peter had, we need to rise again. And when masses forsake the Lord, we need to say like Peter that we have nowhere else to go.

When Paul's and Barnabas' have sharp disagreements and they go their separate ways, we recognize that didn't catch the Lord by surprise. Where else can you go? To whom shall you go? Do the struggles that you and I face, do they cause you to stumble and doubt the Lord? Or do they cause you to trust Him and realize that He has promised to guard you and He knew what was going to happen? All the errors in the world today should not make you question the Lord. 2 Timothy 2, it says, their talk will spread like gangrene.

Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus who have swerved from the truth saying that the resurrection has already happened. Listen to this. He says they are upsetting the faith of some.

Is your faith getting upset by some error? He says in v. 19, the next verse, but guess what? God's firm foundation stands, bearing His seal. The Lord knows who are His. And this should give you assurance, brethren.

Jesus knew. Judas was going to be an apostate. Hymenaeus and Philetus did not catch the Lord by surprise.

If He's opened your eyes, if you can say that I am satisfied in Christ, I've feasted on Christ, I've eaten of the bread of life, I've found that He satisfies my soul. No matter what happens, He is the treasure. He is the true food and meat.

How do you even know that? The flesh was no help at all. It was the Spirit who gave you life. I mean, what happened to me? God changed me, saved me.

It's a miracle. And He's keeping me. The Lord cares about us.

Even in Revelation, we find this again. At the start of the letter, He speaks about what He's about to write is the things that must soon take place. And look, whatever your view is on the end times, many would take this to be a great encouragement that those early disciples were about to face many of these things right then, and Christ is telling them what's going to happen before it takes place in order again to strengthen them.

So brethren, how does this apply? We have countless verses that describe to us the suffering we will face, the tribulation, the emotional pain, the trials, the apostasy that's going to happen on our way to enter the kingdom. And we have verses that speak about God, a God who hears us. We should go to Him.

We should be praying to Him. We should not lose heart. We have hundreds of prophecies spoken about the cross.

We have before us the fulfillment of the cross and of Christ's ascension. We have much spoken to us about the second coming that we're eagerly awaiting for. It's going to happen.

One day He's going to come. We have much spoken to us about the false teacher's arising in latter times who will twist the truth. Again, none of this should surprise us.

Now here, what do I have? Ten minutes? Five minutes? Here another application is. And this one is a little... I'm not going to be able to thoroughly deal with it, but you're thinking about this. You're dealing with what topic Christ is foretelling.

He's speaking about what is going to take place. What would be one of the passages that would come to your mind from a New Testament church? 1 Corinthians 14. Does that come to anyone's mind? 39.

What does Paul say there? So my brothers earnestly desire to prophesy. I mean, Paul's saying that. Is that a church history book? Maybe you're a cessationist.

Maybe you're a continuationist. How you interpret that? I can't get into all of that. Right here, right at this moment.

But I'd say this, one big question would be this, what does Paul mean, obviously, by prophesying? Let me just give you an example of what one godly brother, who I respect, means by prophecy. This is something John Piper wrote. He said this, I pray for the gift of prophecy almost as often as I pray for anything before I stand up to speak.

This prayer for prophecy is a desire to preach under an anointing in order to say things agreeable to the Scriptures and subject to the Scriptures that are not in my manuscript or in my head as I walk into the pulpit, nor thought of ahead of time, which would come to my mind, which would pierce in an extraordinary way so that 1 Corinthians 14 would happen. Whether you agree or disagree with his statement there, I've prayed that many a time in my Christian life. Everyone, I heard Piper talk on that.

Lord, give me something to say that someone here specifically needs, that You've not revealed it to me, even coming into this pulpit, that I would say it. Spurgeon had that happen all the time in his preaching. Whether you want to call it prophecy or whatever's happened, I'll tell you, God cares so much about His sheep that He's allowed that to happen.

Has there been a lot of abuse that's happened? Yeah, and guess what? That's not caught the Lord by surprise either. There's a lot of stuff being said in this banner of prophecy that is damaging, destructive. People coming and saying things to people about what God's told them that totally deceived them.

I think that's all I'll say on that. But to me, that's a valid application if you were to think about what I'm preaching on right now. You wouldn't ignore 1 Corinthians 14.

So what do you call the words of Christ? What do you call His sayings? Let me point out one more thing in John 6. Are Jesus' sayings in John 6 hard sayings? Yes or no? Are Jesus' sayings in John 6 hard sayings? Yes or no? No. Look at John 6. Who says they're hard sayings? The apostates. The apostates.

Who do you and I, who fits us in John 6? Peter. What's Peter called his words? These are the words of eternal life. Peter never says his words are hard.

Peter says these are words of eternal life. Brethren, that really hit me. I would always call these sayings in John 6 hard sayings.

Peter calls them words of eternal life. How can I enter into the apostate and call the words of Christ what the apostate calls the words of Christ? Why not call the words of Christ what Peter calls the words of Christ? Not those who abandon Christ. And this all again goes back to what is your perception on Christ and His words and how He speaks? I'm trying to show you, we have a Christ here in John 6 who's not beating the sheep down.

Yes, He's saying things that are difficult. And yes, the way is hard that leads to life. But ultimately, He's saying things that are life to them about eating of His flesh and He came down from heaven and He's going to ascend and even telling them that one of them is a devil.

Christ is saying that for their upbuilding and their encouragement. You know what some call the words of Christ? John 10. Many of them said He's got a demon and He is insane.

Why listen to Him? Brethren, I hope I've given you many reasons this morning that you should and will listen to Christ. He's not insane. He doesn't have a demon.

Everything He ever spoke was true. And everything He ever spoke, it ended up being fulfilled. And if you view the Christ as saying things that are hard like these disciples here, they forsook Him.

View His words as what they are. They're words of life. They're words of truth.

They're words of comfort. They're words of consolation. They're words that will be fulfilled.

And so have you eaten of this Christ? You know, does Jesus want to keep us against our will? That's a tricky question. Do you want to go away? What do you want? Is there anyone here meditating and contemplating deserting Christ? What's your reason? This passage suggests the possibility of you also going away from the Christ. Don't fill your mind with ill thoughts about Christ, about His Word, about what He has spoken.

But rather, feast on Him. Should a more intimate acquaintance with Christ cause you to flee from Him? It shouldn't. What did it cause these people to do? Turn back.

I don't know if Craig mentioned this in a sermon or not at some point or if it was at a single study, but you mentioned some worship leader who in a church for 20 years would lead all the worship and then he finally started reading his Bible and he said, well, this isn't my God. And he forsook the faith. You see, he had no real acquaintance with Christ.

How acquainted are you with this Christ? Shouldn't cause you to flee from Him. Many found Him to be what they didn't think. You know what I find Him to be? I find Him to be far more caring for His own than maybe at first glance I thought He was from John 6 and John 13.

Christ foretelling of Judas' betrayal and even allowing it to take place was in no way preventing His plan. But He was actually being used to fulfill His mission. Therefore, there should be no ground of doubt at all.

Okay, I have time for one more thought. Here a thought is that hit me. Luke 22, this kind of deals with this.

They blindfolded Him and they kept asking Him, what did they keep asking Him to do? Prophecy. And prophecy and say who it is He struck me. You know what, and maybe this has hit you before, but I thought, what fools.

He doesn't prophesy and say who it is who hit Him. But what are they doing by hitting Him? Fulfilling prophecy. You're mocking Him saying prophecy while you're fulfilling prophecy from Isaiah 53.

It's incredible. I mean, you can't beat this Christ. He's going to come back one day.

He's going to conquer the world. He already is Lord. When I say you can't beat Him, I mean, no matter how much you want to fight against Him, you want to twist what He's saying, you want to believe that He does not have the words of eternal life, you're going to lose.

He is the way, the truth, the life, and no one is going to come to God the Father except through Him. And so, brethren, this Bible front to back, it shows us that nothing has caught the Lord by surprise. Apply that to your own life.

This Bible has words to encourage you and give you hope as you endure trials and sufferings as Christ. And you know, whatever happens when you stand up at work against giving truth to your boss, who knows what's going to happen. You know what? The Bible speaks about what might happen, and if it does happen, then you're not caught by surprise.

Either fire, you get converted, or something in the middle. Well, Joshua 23, verse 14, now I'm about to go all the way of all the earth. He's telling them, and you know in your hearts and your souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things the Lord God has promised concerning you.

All have come to pass for you, not one of them has failed. Amen. Let's pray.

Lord, I thank You so much for Your incredible discernment and care and foresight and knowledge. Lord, I'm just amazed how little I know You as I confront Your Word and I confront how You deal with situations and people. Lord, You ask questions that we wouldn't even think to ask to the twelve that remain.

Who would turn around and ask them if they want to go as well? And then after their response, who would say, I have chosen you, yet one of you is a devil. Yet, Lord, I trust if we rightly understand that, that You wanting to up-build and encourage and tell what's going to happen before it takes place so that when it does take place, we believe You. And Lord, we don't know what's going to take place in our lives, but we know that You know what's going to take place.

So when it takes place, us knowing that You knew it, Lord, help us to believe You. Help us to trust You. Help us to more and more find ourselves committed to You, the One who has the words of eternal life.

Lord, we don't view Your words as hard. They're words of life. They're words to feast on.

And we thank You for giving us such precious words even in this book. Lord, help us to know You more. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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