A Match Made in Hell

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[0:00] If you take out your Bibles, we'll open once again to 2 Peter. Tonight we'll be in chapter 2, verses 4-16.

As you know, our world is a dark place. There's a lot of evil in it. Lots of sin and evil take place every day, most of which we don't even know about.
If you were to be sent on a mission to find and give a report on how much evil and how much sin there is in the world, how would you do it?
Well, first you'd need to define what evil and sin is. So how would you define it for the purposes of this study? Would you define it loosely as something that negatively impacts others?
Would you include just sin as God defines it? If you were counting up the evil, would you only count external actions? Or would you also include evil thoughts of the heart?
[1:06] If you were going to include those, how would you calculate them? How would you know about them taking place? Whatever you decide on those things, what you would quickly discover is that the amount of sin in our world is well beyond calculation.

And obviously there's sin in our own hearts as well, but even just among the evil that we know about taking place in the world right now, how many of those people get away with it?
How many of those people never are punished for their wrongdoing, for their participation in those evil deeds? And even further than that, how many crimes are committed that we never even know about?
How many sins are committed that we never find out about at all? And in the face of all of that sin and all of the darkness in our world, it can be really easy for us to get to a place where we're like, what good does one righteous life do?
Like, does my life actually make an impact on this world? What difference does my life make? And the Christians that Peter is writing to started to feel the same way.
[2:21] Their evil, the evil had come home in their church as these false teachers had risen up inside the walls of the church and were starting to lead people astray. And in situations like that, it can be easy for faithful Christians to become discouraged and just think, what can I do to help our church stay faithful?

And Peter encourages them in this passage tonight. And the way he encourages them is he lets them know that God's not playing games. God won't let anyone get away with anything.
God will not let false teachers get away with their wickedness. God will not let sin go unpunished anywhere. God will fully and finally deal with evil in every place where it is found.
And Peter relies on God's track record to encourage them. He points back into the past to show how God has dealt with evildoers in the Old Testament.
And so last week at the end of our passage, we got through chapter 2, verse 3. Peter introduces us to these false teachers. He tells us roughly what they are like.
[3:34] They are sexually immoral. They are prideful. They reject authority. And now he is going to further explain what sins they commit in this passage.

He is going to explain their punishments and he is going to tell us what their specific sins are. And so we have two points tonight for our passage. One is three examples of God's judgment.
And the second is three traits of false teachers. So firstly, three examples of God's judgment. And we see this in verses 4 through the first part of verse 10.
And so if you are with me, I want to look at verse 4. He says 4. And so he is basing this on what he has just said in verse 3. So in verse 3 he says that, talking about the false teachers, their condemnation from long ago is not idle.

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And their destruction is not asleep. God is going to judge them completely. And God is going to judge them quickly. And here is the reason why.
[4:42] Now I want you to kind of let your eyes kind of float through this text a little bit. Look with me at verse 4. He says, And so what we have here is by Peter repeating this word if, he's setting up a long if-then statement.

And so this if part of the statement is in verses 4 through 8. And the conclusion comes in verses 9 and 10. And in verses 4 through 10 he gives us three examples of God's judgment.
All of them from the book of Genesis. He's going to give us three examples. The example of the angels. The example of the ancient world. And the example of Sodom and Gomorrah.
So we see first example is the angels in verse 4. He says, We can read about this in Genesis chapter 6 verses 1 through 4.
These angels had fallen from heaven. They became demons rebelling against God. And to further their rebellion they committed sexual immorality with human women.
[6:09] And so that's what Peter's referring to here. These angels when they rebelled were not spared. God did not have mercy on them. He judged them. Now their ultimate judgment is coming in the future on the final day of judgment.

But even now they're bound in the abyss. Or as he says here, cast them into hell. And they're in chains of gloomy darkness. These angels were sentenced to hell until they faced their final judgment before the Lord.
And interestingly in the ESV there's a footnote. So there's a little number one in my Bible. And at the bottom it says that the word Peter actually uses here is Tartarus. This is kind of the lowest level of hell in Greek and Roman mythology.
And I don't think Peter's lending credence to the myth. But what he's doing is he's using a word that these people are familiar with. He's saying that we have a concept for this.
You guys have a concept for this. And that's where these angels are being held. They're being held captive in hell awaiting their full and final judgment on the last day. And so the first example of God's judgment is the angels that sinned against the Lord and were judged.
[7:25] The second example of God's judgment is the ancient world. Verse 5, Here he's referring to the flood when he wiped out the entire world.

Every creature except what was on the ark. You can read about this in Genesis 6 through 8. Now this example is different and the next example is different from the first as well.
Because there's not just an example of God's judgment. There's also an example of his salvation. An example of him preserving someone through that judgment that he brings on the people that he's judging.
And when we think about Noah, who was Noah? He was the one who was preserved, verse 5, but preserved Noah. And we're like, he's the ark builder guy.
Like he's the one who built the boat that saved everyone. How does Peter describe him? He doesn't describe him primarily as an ark builder. He describes him as a herald or a preacher of righteousness.
[8:43] And so Peter is saying that Noah was preaching and warning people about the coming flood. And what he's really warning them about is he's warning them about God's judgment that's going to come on the whole world.

Noah was warning his friends. Noah was warning his neighbors. But the ungodly world always rejects messages of God's judgment.
We are sinners. And we do not like to hear about judgment. We do not like to hear about us being held accountable to God for what we've done. And that pattern begins all the way back in Genesis 6 when the unbelieving world rejected what Noah said.
And so because of that, it was just Noah and his family who were saved. Noah, a herald of righteousness with seven others. It was his wife, his three sons, and their wives.
And God preserved him when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly. And the word for flood is literally cataclysm. So this was catastrophic devastation that was brought to the earth and all the creatures on it.
[9:54] And now the flood is incredibly important to Peter. He's actually going to come back to it in chapter 3 again. Because remember what the issue is behind this letter.

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Why is Peter writing this letter? There are false teachers that have risen within the church. And what is it that they're saying? They're saying that Jesus will not come back again and he will not judge the world.
And so Peter, for him, the flood is really important because it's an example of God's judgment. But it's also an example of judgment that came upon the whole entire world. Every creature faced that judgment.
And so he'll come back to that idea again in chapter 3 we'll see in a few weeks. The third example of God's judgment is in verses 6-8 and it's Sodom and Gomorrah. Verse 6.
If by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction. Making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly.
[10:58] And we just covered this in Sunday school a few weeks ago. But in Genesis 19 we can read about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. God completely wiped these cities off the map.

Reduced them to just a pile of ashes. So much so that we're still not even sure exactly where these cities were. We know the general region. But they were utterly wiped out. And the land was completely devastated that no one has rebuilt it since.
It was just brought to complete ashes. Why did God do this? Well he did this because of their sin. And he did this to make an example of them.
Their sin was homosexuality and you can read about that in Genesis 19. God killed these cities because of that sin. But he's not just judging them because of their sin.
He's also doing it to make an example of them. And that's what Peter says. Making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly.
[12:00] And so the way Peter describes this judgment is it's a warning shot to the whole world. It's putting the whole world on notice that God is not playing games. He is patient towards sinners.

He is merciful towards sinners. But ultimately he will judge sin. He will judge sinners. He will bring devastation and judgment to those who rebel against him.
And even in this dark backdrop of judgment there's yet another example of his salvation. Of his preservation in verse 7. And if he rescued righteous Lot.
And if you read the story in Genesis. We've got to ask the question. How in the world could he call Lot righteous? Lot's just kind of a loser.
Like in Genesis. Like he just can't make a right decision. He's making the wrong decision. He's under duress. He's living in a bad city. He makes more bad decisions. He gets saved by God which is good news.
[13:01] And then he makes even worse decisions after that. So how can Lot be called righteous by Peter? Well we need to understand that fundamentally. When we're reading about righteous Old Testament people.

Or people who believe in God. They are righteous by faith. Fundamentally. So that means they believe in God. But they don't have their life together.
They are still sinners just like we are. And so Peter is going to explain kind of some of the logic behind how he can call Lot righteous. Even though we have so many examples of him being unrighteous or unwise.
It says he was greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked. Verse 8. For as that righteous man lived among them day after day.
He was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard. It is an indication of righteousness to be bothered by sin.
[14:04] To be bothered by your own sin. To be bothered by the sin of those around you. To be bothered by the sins of people in our country. We as believers should be disturbed by sin.

Sin that's within us. Sin that's committed by us. And sin that's committed by people around us. Whether in our country or in our neighborhood or in our state. And as we think about this on a personal level.
Sin that we as Christians can be really guilty of being too lenient toward sin. And so a personal question we need to answer is.
Are you okay with watching a lot of sin on TV or on your phone? Are you comfortable with that? And I'm not being legalistic here.
But there are certain things that we as believers should not be okay being entertained by. Or watching. And Peter is saying that this is one of the signs that Lot was righteous.

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[15:06] Because he was living in a horribly corrupt society. A horribly corrupt city that was really evil. And it bothered him. It wasn't right to him.

Now we'll never be able to avoid all sin. There are certain sins we will be confronted with in our world. There are certain sins we will witness. Certain sins we will hear about.
Or certain sins we will hear themselves. And so we can't avoid seeing or hearing all sin. Just like Lot couldn't avoid it in Sodom and Gomorrah. If we were going to try to avoid all sin.
We'd have to just leave the world entirely. So we can't avoid all sin. All observation of it. But a constant exposure to it is damaging to our souls.
A constant and willing exposure. A willing participation in it. Does cause damage to our souls. Hopefully you go to the dentist.
[16:04] If you don't, you should. But hopefully you do. And if you've ever gone to the dentist and gotten an x-ray of your teeth. Which they do for me like roughly every other time. They put like a big like lead vest on you.

And they're like okay. And then they walk out of the room. And as a kid I'm like this thing's aimed at my head. And like you're standing over there behind the wall. Like that doesn't seem right.
And because radiation is dangerous to us. But come to find out. So they tell me. I don't know if it's true or not. But I believed it. That if you get small amounts of it. It's not super damaging to you.
But if that dental hygienist or whoever they are. Is constantly exposed to that over and over. Day by day. That will start to cause a lot of damage to their bodies. And so that's kind of what I'm talking about.
There are certain contact with sin that we just can't avoid. You're going to work in an ungodly place. You're going to go to school with ungodly people. You're going to have people in your family. Who don't glorify the Lord.
[17:03] And you can't avoid coming in contact with their sin. But if you're willingly and constantly exposing yourself to sin. And to observing it and being entertained by it.

Over time. That will damage the sensitivity of your soul. That will make you less effective in your service to Christ. And as we think about Lot living in Sodom and Gomorrah.
As we think about ourselves living in an ungodly society as well. We do need to remember that the world. The ungodly world. Is not our enemy.
Now they will treat us like enemies. They will hate us. They will disagree with the message we preach. They will disagree with our lifestyles. But we are to be loving toward them.
We are to preach the gospel to them. We are to want them to receive God's love. And so they will treat you like enemies.
[18:06] But Jesus says to bless those who persecute you. And to love our enemies. That doesn't mean we accept them. In their sin. But it does mean we need to show love to them.

So invite them to church. Share the gospel with them. Offer to read the Bible with them. We will see in chapter 3 of this letter. That God does not delight in the death of the wicked.
He will judge them. But he does not delight in their destruction. He desires them to be saved. So that is three examples of God's judgment in the Old Testament.
From the book of Genesis. Now all three of these examples are connected by kind of a couple of commonalities. And so those two things that hold these three examples together are.
That they rejected authority. And they were sexually immoral. They rejected authority. And they were sexually immoral. And so the examples themselves of God judging sinners are important.
[19:10] But even the commonalities that those groups of people who were judged have in common. Are important to how Peter is going to apply this to these false teachers. Those two things that mark to these people who are judged by God.

Also are traits of the false teachers in these churches. And so Peter concludes this in verse 9. Then.
Then. So he said if, if, if, if, if, if. Then. And if you're in a math class maybe you've had some if-then statements. You guys had those before? Okay. So one example.
If A equals B. And if B equals C. Then what? A equals C. Great job. So that's an example of an if-then statement.
If these things are true. Then this conclusion follows. And that's what Peter is saying here. If God didn't spare the angels. If God didn't spare the entire ancient world. And if God did not spare Sodom and Gomorrah.

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[20:12] Then. What's his point? The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials. And to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.

So the Lord knows two things. He knows how to rescue the godly from trials. Think about Noah and his family. Lot and his family. He also knows how to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.
Thinking about the angels. The ancient world. And the cities of Sodom. And Gomorrah. And so Peter is saying. Check God's track record.
He judges sin. And he also knows how to save his people through that judgment. If you're a college football fan like I am.
The Indiana Hoosiers just won the national championship. Like the first time since the flood. And they've got a coach by the name of Signetti. You've probably seen memes about him.
[21:16] But when he got to Indiana. Someone. A reporter was asking him. Like you know. How do you recruit people to Indiana? Like implying like Indiana is terrible. Like how do you get people to come here?

You know. What's your philosophy? And he said. I tell them. I win. Google me. And it went viral. Great response. Right? That's kind of what Peter is telling us to do with God here.
Google him. Look at what he's done. Look at his track record. Look at what he's accomplished. He consistently judges sin. Sin. He consistently judges the wicked.
But he also saves his people. Even as he pours out that judgment. And especially verse 10. Those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion.
And despise authority. There's the two commonalities that all three of these groups have. They reject authority. And they give in to sexual immorality. And they despise authority.
[22:15] Specifically Christ's authority. And in the case of these churches. They're rejecting Christ. They're denying the master that they claim is over them. And now these Christians who are trying to be faithful.

That Peter's writing to. Would have been in the minority. In the minority in their church. And certainly in the minority of the Roman Empire where they lived. And so these examples are intended to encourage them.
To encourage them to look at Noah. He and his family were the only ones who believed God's message in the entire world. And God saved them. Look at Lot.
He was distressed by the sin he saw around him. And God saved him even though everyone around him was killed. Peter is saying God is going to judge these false teachers one day.
And he's going to preserve you. If you resist the pull of sexual immorality and rebellion that these false teachers are trying to influence you towards.
[23:19] These Christians would have been in the minority. There's a guy from church history who was largely responsible for the reformation in England.

And he was persecuted by one of the queens of England. And he really stood alone for most of his life. And ultimately was killed for his message of Christ.
And he has a famous statement. And he said, One man standing with God is in the majority. And so you can go against the entire world.
You can go against the current of this world. And like Paul says in Romans 8, If God is for us, who can be against us? They may put the body to death.
But the Lord knows how to preserve his people and to judge the ungodly. He is not playing games. Are you on his side? Or will you follow this rebellious world?
[24:23] This sexually immoral world? Remember that no one will get away with their sin. In this next section, starting halfway through verse 10 through verse 16, Peter is going to further describe these false teachers to us.

He's described them in general in verses 1 through 3. But now he's going to get specific about their sins. And so we see secondly three traits of false teachers. Three traits of false teachers.
Peter is going to list about eight characteristics of these false teachers. But we can kind of categorize them into three bigger groups. And those three groups are pride, lust, and greed.
Pride, lust, and greed. And so the first category of, the first trait of a false teacher is pride. And we see this in verses 10 through 13.
He describes them as bold and willful. Or we can put them together, boldly willful. They do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones.

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[25:35] And the glorious ones refers to angelic beings. And I think based on the context, actually this term refers to demons. Those angels who have fallen.

And so these false teachers are blaspheming or slandering fallen angels or fallen demons. And we see that because verse 11 he says, Whereas, so a contrasting example, angels, though greater in might and power than the false teachers, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord.
And so these false teachers, the picture we get is that they are slandering demons. They're openly calling out demons and openly calling out Satan and openly renouncing him and cursing him. And Peter is saying, but angels, even though the angels are much stronger and mightier than these false teachers, they themselves don't pronounce a word of judgment against demons and against Satan.
And if you want to write down Jude verse 9, just Jude 9, there's an interesting story there where Michael the archangel is in an argument with Satan about the body of Moses.
Crazy story. But Michael doesn't rebuke Satan. Michael does not pronounce a blasphemous word of judgment against Satan.
[26:57] Instead, what he says is, The Lord rebuke you. And so Peter is appealing to that example and saying, These angels themselves don't even rebuke the demons. And yet, these false teachers are openly calling out Satan.

And if you think about some of the false teachers in our own day, they're constantly talking about demonic activity, constantly talking about Satan, constantly speaking to him and banishing him over and over again.
In verse 12, he says, But these, the false teachers, These false teachers are like animals who respond and react based on instinct rather than reason.
And animals are not reasonable. If you have a pet, you know this. They do stupid stuff. And the stupidest animals I can think of right now are the squirrels in my neighborhood.
So, Lacey and I used to live in Westbury. So, it was a neighborhood kind of on the north side by I-40. And the squirrels there were pretty smart. Like, you didn't really see them get run over.
[28:18] Like, they were neighborhood squirrels. They were suburban squirrels. You know, they're sophisticated and stuff. They drink with their pinky out. And they were pretty well able to avoid traffic. Like, you only saw one get run over very rarely.

Lacey and I moved September of 24 to Behind the Bridge Church on 152. So, it's a little bit more spread out. And the squirrels are hicks. Like, they're idiots. They've never seen a car in their life. And so, the first week we lived there, Lacey hit a squirrel and I hit a squirrel. The first seven days we lived there. And in the first month, there were two more casualties to the squirrel kind.
They just run in the middle of the street and freeze. They're fools. Like, they were. And so, they just don't have any ability to reason or think.
And that's kind of what Peter is comparing these false teachers to. Not squirrels specifically, but you get the point. These false teachers are born to be judged by God. They're born to be caught and killed.
[29:22] And so, what Peter is saying here is that the judgment of God and false teachers is a match made in hell. They were made for each other. False teachers are intended to be judged.

It's a fitting end for them. And they're blaspheming about matters of which they're ignorant. They're blaspheming about demons and the angels.
Something that not even the angels themselves will do. This is a trait of false teachers. It's a weird form of pride. And I would just caution you, not only to stay away from people who constantly focus and obsess on demonic activity and demons, but also to stay away from any entertainment that that's the main focus.
Whether it's ghost chasing or ghost hunting or whatever it is, paranormal activity type stuff. I'd encourage you to stay away from it. And he says that they will also be destroyed in their destruction.
Verse 13, suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. You will reap what you sow. You will harvest what you plant. And false teachers are planting judgment for themselves in the future.
[30:38] Now, I need you to exercise some self-control here. Here, Galatians 6-7. Great job, everyone. Good job. Paul says, Do not be deceived. God is not mocked.

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For whatever one sows, that will he also reap. However you live this life, it will come back to you in eternity. You will be judged according to your deeds.
And one of my favorite movies is Gladiator, because I'm a middle-aged white guy. And in one of the opening scenes, the general of the Roman army, his name is Maximus, in the movie, they're about to go into war.
And he says, What you do in life echoes in eternity. And he's trying to exhort his men to bravery and valor as they lay down their lives on the battlefield.
But that little statement is true. It aligns with what the Bible teaches, that how you live this life has impact on eternity. And Peter is saying these false teachers are going to be judged because of what they've done.
[31:50] Now the second trait of false teachers is lust. We see this in verses 13 and 14. It says, They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime.

There are blots and blemishes reveling in their deceptions while they feast with you. They have eyes full of adultery, or eyes full of an adulteress. Insatiable for sin.
They entice unsteady souls. And so he describes them as reveling in the daytime. And reveling is a reference to sexually immoral activity. And most immoral things, just in general, happen after dark. For most of history, that's been the case. And even the Romans thought it was too far. These pagan Romans thought it was too far to participate in actions like this during the daytime.
But these false teachers didn't care. They crossed lines that even the pagan world around them thought were atrocious. And so Peter says there are blots and blemishes.
[32:51] Reveling in their deceptions while they feast with you. And so Peter is saying that they come to the Lord's table. They come to take the Lord's supper with you. And in this moment that's intended to be holy and honoring to Christ, they're using it as an opportunity to sin.

And he says they have eyes full of adultery or eyes full of an adulteress. And so these false teachers, these men, cannot look at women without viewing them as potential partners in their sexual immorality.
And this is the nature of lust. It is enslaving. It takes you downward and downward and downward until you become its slave. And so we, young men in particular, need to be like Job in chapter 31 verse 1 where he says, I've made a covenant with my eyes.
How then could I gaze at a young woman? And we need to remember Jesus' words in Matthew 5, 28 that whoever lusts after a woman, whoever looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
These false teachers cannot get enough of their sin. Peter says they're insatiable. They're unable to be satisfied.
[34:14] Because sin by nature does not satisfy anyone. And continuing in verse 14, we see that there's another trait that they have.

They're greedy. They have hearts trained in greed. But I skipped a phrase, so let's go back. It says they entice unsteady souls.
They don't just sin themselves. They trick other people into sinning with them. They trap other people in their own sin.
And that word entice means to catch with bait. And so I like to fish. I don't fish as much anymore as I used to. But at the heart of fishing, it's deception, which I feel slightly guilty about sometimes.
But that's what these false teachers are doing to the people around them who are unsteady. People around them who don't know the Bible like they should. And so your primary defense against being deceived is knowing the Bible.
[35:14] And so you need to read the Bible because you need to know the Bible so that you don't get tricked by someone who claims to teach the Bible. And so we need the truth. We need to know what God's Word says so that we aren't enticed.

That we're not these unsteady souls. The third trait of them is that they are greedy. We see this as they have hearts trained in greed.
That word for trained is the word gymnasium. And so they've trained for this. They've exercised for this. They've gotten in shape to do this. They've trained themselves to want money.
They've got hearts that are constantly set on what other people have and what they want. And they're willing to lie to get it. And Peter calls them accursed children.

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They're children under God's curse. And we see in verses 15 and 16, part of their greed. They're forsaking the right way.
[36:11] They've gone astray. And so again, these people rose up from inside the church. They're double agents. They seemed to be following Christ for a time and they've gone astray from following him.

And in doing so, they've followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing. And if you want to write down numbers 22 through 25, you can read the story of Balaam.
Essentially, Balaam was like a prophetic hitman. He was a gun for hire. If the price was right, he would consult your gods and tell you what they were saying. He wasn't so concerned about what the truth was.
He was just interested in how much money he could make by doing his job. And so he takes a job to prophesy against Israel, to curse Israel. Verse 16, but was rebuked for his own transgression. He sinfully took a job to speak against Israel and the Lord rebuked him. But how did the Lord rebuke him? We see that a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.
[37:25] And so if you read the story, this beast that he's riding sees these angels. They're trying to prevent Balaam from going there, but Balaam himself can't see them. And finally, the donkey talks to him and tells him what's going on.

And so this prophet, who's supposed to be able to consult all the gods and understand the will of the gods, understands less than the donkey that he's riding on.
And this kind of closes the loop on how Peter's describing these false teachers. He describes them as irrational animals, creatures of instinct. That's what Balaam was. He didn't understand any more than a dumb donkey did.
And that's what these false teachers are as well. And so don't be discouraged by the amount of evil we see around us.
The Lord is going to do something about it. But we do need to be two things. We need to be encouraged by his track record. And we need to beware of false teachers.
[38:28] And remember that false teachers will receive judgment. False teachers and judgment just go together. Judgment is coming from Christ and no one will get away with anything.

And so my encouragement for you is to know God's word, to read God's word, and live in such a way that when Christ comes back, you won't be ashamed of how you've lived this life. Christ will destroy this world and he will preserve his people.
He will preserve his people from his judgment because he has already taken our judgment on him as he laid down his life for us on the cross.
No more wrath for the believer, only victory because of what Christ has done. Let me pray for us.
Our Father, you are good to us. We thank you for a good night of being able to sing to you.
You are praises based on what you've done for us and who you are. I pray that as students go to small groups and reflect on this text of your examples of past judgment and also the traits of false teachers that we would be wise, that we would be sober-minded and think clearly about how you want your church to be ordered and how to respond to error when it comes up.
[39:45] And it's in Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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