

The Church Will Overcome: Suffering and Persecution as Our Way to Glory

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Preacher: Justin Ma

[0 : 0 0] Okay, well good morning from me. My name is Kevin. If you don't know me, I am not going to be preaching today But I am going to lead us in a time of prayer So if you are new to watermark, we pray at this time our service each week And part of the reason for that is we don't just want to come to church and sing a few songs Listen to a message and go home The point of why we gather on Sunday is to encounter the living God That's our goal on Sundays and we do that through song We do it through looking at His word, but we also do that through prayer And so this is an important part of our service I am going to lead us in a time of prayer, but I want to ask you to join me And so listen to what I am praying for and you agree in your own heart to say yes Lord That is, I agree with that, I want to pray for that And then just, I wonder if we can get the slide up, we should have a slide Okay, I don't know if you can see that picture These are some new friends of mine Their names are Mohammed and Damira Nagumanov Okay, and these guys have planted a church in Kazakhstan

I met them this week in Malaysia And Mohammed is not because he is Muslim It's just in Kazakhstan that is a regular name But Mohammed was, grew up in Kazakhstan Was part of the Soviet Union, I think chemistry program Woke up one day, was about to go to Moscow the next day To join the Soviet Union chemistry program Woke up that morning and the whole Soviet empire had fallen This is around like 1990 or so And his whole world came to an end He believed that the Soviet empire was God And so suddenly he realized my whole world has come to an end That led him to search for Christ Became a follower of Jesus And they've been planting this church in Elmati In Kazakhstan And so we're going to pray for them as a church And so won't you join me as we pray together Let's come before our Father in prayer Sovereign Lord, Majestic God We do come before you as a church family this morning

To adore you and to worship you To lift up your name and to declare your praises Father, thank you that we can stand firm on the truth That though the storms of life come You are sovereign and you are faithful You are majestic and glorious, God And even though, as we're going to hear this morning There is an enemy of ours called Satan That is going to try and torment the church But God, we stand on the truth that you are sovereign That our enemy is a defeated foe And that you, Christ, rule and reign over all things Father, thank you for your incredible patience with us Thank you that you're so long-suffering, God Father, we do worship you this morning We think of Psalm 14 that says How the fool says in his heart There is no God And Father, this morning we confess that Many of us, myself included We live our lives often, day to day As if you are not real As if you are not on the throne God, even though at our heads we acknowledge you

In our hearts, God, we live foolishly Looking to ourselves And Father, we want to confess that this morning And ask you to One, forgive us But two, come and reorientate our hearts back to you God, we want to live day by day Reliantly on you, oh God Trusting in your amazing grace Father, make us like Proverbs 1 says Those that fear you And really live in awe of you Father, this morning as we come to your word In Revelation 13 and 14 We pray that you will speak to us We pray for Justin who will be preaching We pray God that it won't be his words that speak to us But your words through your written word Jesus, we want to encounter you in your word And so we pray, prepare all of our hearts To meet with you in your scriptures this morning God, anything that is not of you We pray it will fall on deaf ears And we pray that your word will come alive God, show us how to respond to your word this morning Father, this morning we want to also pray for our great city For Hong Kong The city in which we live And God, in the midst of the continued difficulties

And challenges of our cities We ask you God, won't you show us our own hearts God, won't you reveal to us Where our hearts are hoping or trusting in false gods Rather than you Father, where there is anger and resentment Towards one party or another We pray God, you show us what's in our hearts What's underlying that anger God God, we pray that the church And not only for Watermark But for other churches Make us agents of peace and hope in our city God Father, we pray for our political leaders We pray for the police, Lord We pray for those that are trying to Restore peace, Lord God, to our city We pray God for wisdom We pray for the protesters, God Those that are so upset about what's going on And want to make a stand for justice, God We pray that in all of this Your peace will prevail, God We pray that emotions will subside, God And for peace in the hearts of all Father, we do pray for our city that we love And we pray that your kingdom will come here

[5 : 06] May it be in Hong Kong as it is in heaven We pray, God And then finally, Father This morning we want to pray for Our new friends in Kazakhstan For Mohammed and Demira God, we pray for them And the work that they're doing We pray, God, want you to give them Increased wisdom In the midst of increasing government opposition To the kingdom of God And the church and the gospel in Kazakhstan We pray, God, give them amazing wisdom How to evangelize and witness How to share your gospel God, we pray that their church will be strong, Lord We pray for leaders to emerge, God And for young leaders to emerge, Lord We pray, God, that your blessing and your power Will rest upon their congregation We pray for new churches to be planted in Kazakhstan, God We pray that the gospel will go forward there, Lord We pray that your kingdom will come We pray that many young Kazakhs will come to know you, God We pray for church unity in that nation, Lord That Presbyterians and Pentecostals, Baptists

Everyone across the spectrum will work together And be unified by their love for you, Jesus And we pray for their family, God We pray for their children And for Muhammad and Damaru's marriage, God We pray strengthen them and encourage them Refresh them and revitalize them, we pray Father, we love to come before you and pray Thank you that you're such a good and faithful God You're so faithful, Lord There's no one and none like you And we love you, Lord We pray these things in your wonderful And your patient In your sovereign name Amen Amen Great, Jefferson and Annabelle are going to read God's word to us this morning The scripture reading comes from Revelation chapter 13 to 14 Please follow along in your bulletin or on the screen And I saw a beast rising out of the sea With ten horns and seven heads With ten diadems on its horns

And blasphemous names on its heads And the beast that I saw was like a leopard Its feet were like a bear's And its mouth was like a lion's mouth And to it the dragon gave its power and its throne And great authority One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound But its mortal wound was healed And the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast And they worshipped the dragon For he had given his authority to the beast And they worshipped the beast, saying Who is like the beast?

And who can fight against it? And the beast was given a mouth Uttering haughty and blasphemous words And it was allowed to exercise authority For forty-two months It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God Blaspheming his name and his dwelling That is those who dwell in heaven Also, it was allowed to make war on the saints And to conquer them And authority was given it Over every tribe and people And language and nation And all who dwell on earth will worship it Everyone whose name has not been written Before the foundation of the world In the book of life of the Lamb who was slain If anyone has an ear, let him hear If anyone is to be taken captive To captivity he goes If anyone is to be slain with the sword With the sword must he be slain Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints

Then I saw another beast Rising out of the earth It had two horns like a lamb And its book like a dragon It exercises all the authority Of the first beast in its presence And makes the earth and its inhabitants Worship the first beast Whose mortal wound was healed It performs great signs Even making fire come down from heaven to earth In front of people And by the signs that it was allowed To work in the presence of the beast It deceived those who dwell on earth Telling them to make an image for the beast That was wounded by the sword and yet lived And it was allowed to give breath To the image of the beast So that the image of the beast Might even speak And might cause those Who would not worship the image of the beast To be slain Also it causes all Both small and great Both rich and poor Both free and slave To be marked on the right hand

[9 : 42] Or the forehead So that no one can buy or sell Unless he has the mark That is the name of the beast Or the number of its name This calls for wisdom Let the one who has understanding Calculate the number of the beast For it is the number of a man And his number is 666 Then I looked And behold On Mount Zion stood the Lamb And with him A hundred and forty-four thousand Who had his name And his father's name Written on their foreheads And I heard a voice from heaven Like the roar of many waters And like the sound of loud thunder The voice I heard Was like the sound of harpists Playing on their hearts And they were singing a new song Before the throne And before the four living creatures And before the elders No one could learn that song Except the hundred and forty-four thousand Who had been redeemed from the earth It is these who have not

Defiled themselves of women For they are virgins It is these who follow the Lamb Wherever he goes These have been redeemed from mankind As firstfruits for God and the Lamb And in their mouth No lie was found For they are blameless Then I saw another angel Flying directly overhead With an eternal gospel To proclaim to those who dwell on earth To every nation and tribe And language and people And he said that with a loud voice Fear God And give him glory Because the hour of his judgment has come And worship him Who made heaven and earth The sea and the springs of water Another angel A second followed Saying Fallen Fallen Is Babylon the great She who made all nations Drink the wine Of the passion Of her sexual immorality And another angel

A third Followed them Saying with a loud voice If anyone worships The beast and its image And receives a mark On his forehead Or on his head He also will drink The wine of God's wrath Pour full strength Into the cup of his anger And he will be tormented With fire And sulfur In the presence Of the holy angels And in the presence Of the Lamb And the smoke Of their torment Goes up forever and ever And they have no rest Day or night These worshippers Of the beast And its image And whoever receives The mark Of his name Here is a call For the endurance Of the saints Those who keep The commandments Of God And their faith In Jesus And I heard a voice From heaven Saying Write this Blessed are the dead Who die in the Lord From now on Blessed indeed Says the spirit That they may rest From their labors For their deeds Follow them Then I looked

And behold A white cloud And seated on the cloud One like a son of man With a golden crown On his head And a sharp sickle In his hand And another angel Came out of the temple Calling out with a loud voice To him Who sat on the cloud Put in your sickle And reap For the hour to reap Has come For the harvest Of the earth Is fully ripe So who he sat On the cloud Swung his sickle Across the earth And the earth Was reaped Then another angel Came out of the temple In heaven And he too Had a sharp sickle And another angel Came out from the altar The angel Who has authority Over the fire And he called With a loud voice To the one Who had the sharp sickle Put in your sickle And gather the clusters From the vine Of the earth For its grapes Are ripe So the angel Swung his sickle Across the earth And gathered The grape harvest Of the earth And threw it

Into the great Wine press Of the wrath of God And when the wine press Was trodden Outside the city And blood flowed From the wine press As high as A horse's bridle For one thousand And six hundred stadia This is the word of God Testing, testing Okay Thank you Jefferson And Annabelle For reading this long passage In Revelations Thirteen to fourteen And I hope the sermon Wouldn't be as long So my name is Justin I have been attending World of Mark For since my freshman year At uni So I've been attending Here for six years If you have been Coming to church For a while And have been attending The last few services In our series

[14 : 48] Called Between the Cross And the Throne You probably have already Known the term Already But not yet It's a term We use to describe The status of God's kingdom And his plan And his plan of salvation Salvation has come Yet one day The Savior himself Will come the second time To meet us face to face But we're not there yet God's kingdom has come Yet one day We will bow down Before his throne Face to face Yet we're not there yet So in this In between time Does God Has a specific plan For the church For you and for I And if I tell you That God has A specific plan And that plan Involves Christians Being slandered Defeated Crushed And even killed

What if I tell you That this path Of persecution And suffering Is not our path To defeat But our path To victory Our path To glory Today We're going to Explore some Very very scary Image Of the defeat Of the church And yet At the same time We're also going to Explore some Very glorious Imagery Of the church Together Together They form A narrative A story Of the church Of you and of I That this narrative Can be broken down Into four segments And we'll look at Each one of them Firstly Satan will conquer The whole world Then we'll see That Satan Will also crush The church But then We'll see That the church Will overcome By embracing Suffering and persecution And lastly

We're going to learn About a new concept Called the Eternal gospel Which means That the hour Of the judgment Has finally come But please Do not leave The service Today Just with these Words on the screen Because these Words alone Would not have Any lasting Impact on you But the imagery And the narrative Will If you allow Yourself to be Captured by them And I think That's the reason Why God Reviews Through a vision To John Instead of a PowerPoint Presentational Words So I encourage You to open Not just Your mind But your heart To be scared By the imagery Of the church Of the defeat Of the church But yet Let your breath Be taken away By the glorious Imagery of the church At the same time So shall we start So firstly We're gonna Last week We saw In Revelation 12 The dragon

Meaning Satan He was defeated In heaven And he was Thrown down To earth And Kevin said In his last breath He tried to wage War against The women The nation of Israel However The woman Was miraculously Rescued And then Satan Moves on To the women's Offspring That is us The church Is then In chapter 13 We see how Satan Presents Hissself To the world Surprisingly And unsurprisingly Satan Presents Hissself As a Counterfeit Of God In other words He tries to Imitate God In drawing The world To himself First We see A beast With ten Horns And seven Heads Ten Diadems On his Horns And blasphemous Names On his Heads John saw This beast And describes

It in a Very Scary Terms He says It's like A leopard With bear's Feet And lion's Mouth Very powerful Looking Isn't it But then He goes On to say That the beast Actually had To receive Power Authority And his Throne From the Dragon Now does that Remind you Of the first Sentence Of the Great Commission All authority In heaven And on earth Has been Given to Me God the Father Gave his Power And his Authority And throne To Jesus And here We're seeing The dragon Doing exactly The same To the beast Then he says That one of The beast Heads Seemed to Have suffered A mortal Wound The passage Does not tell Us why He had Suffered this Wound But we Know that That wound Would have Led to This beast Death But then

[19 : 52] This beast Was miraculously Healed And the Whole earth marvelled And they're Going to Follow the Beast Does that Remind you Of Jesus Resurrection From the Dead And the Church Follows Jesus Because of It The beast By his Appearance Of power And his Resurrection From his Mortal Wound Has made The entire World Worship It People From every Tribe Language And nation All who Dwell On earth Will worship The beast Did we Not read In revelation Four Where john Saw before The throne Of god People from All tribes Nations And languages So just As god's People Are from A diverse Cultural And national Backgrounds We're going to See that Satan has Also drawn

To himself The same Diverse Group of People In another Word Not only Is Satan Being a Counterfeit Of god He is Also Creating A Counterfeit Of the Church Then we See That the Whole world Will say Probably In all Languages Who is Like the Beast And who Can fight Against it We see The same Feeling Of all And reverence In the Song of Moses The song That the Israelites Sang Right after They crossed The Red Sea And saw What god Did To the Horses And chariots Of egypt They sang Who is Like you O lord Among the Gods Who is Like you Majestic And holiness Awesome And glorious These Doing wonders Now Satan Has given His people A song Of victory

A song Of identity Just as God has Given us The same And not Only Will people Worship the Beast They will Also worship The dragon Because the Dragon had Given his Authority To the Beast Does that Remind you Of us Worshipping Both Jesus The son And the Father And just As you Think Enough Is Enough There's Another Beast That Comes Into The scene Unlike This Powerful Looking First Beast The Second Beast Has Two Horns Beast And it Says It Looks Like A Gentle And Harmless Lamb Does that Remind you Of Jesus The Lamb Of God The Second Beast Is able To perform Great Signs And Wonders And By Them The Second Beast Deceives People To make An

Image Of the First Beast And Then He Gives Bread To This Image To Speak And This Whole Act Is Going To Make The Whole World Worship The First Beast So The Second Beast Is Not Asking People To Worship Himself But It Is Doing Propaganda And Campaign For The First Beast Does that Remind you Of the Holy Spirit Who Will Teach Us And Remind Us Of Everything That Jesus Said So All of A Sudden We're Seeing A Evil Trinity Of The Dragon The First Beast And The Second Beast Then He Says Something Very Troubling The Second Beast Causes Everyone To Be Marked On The Right Hand Or The Forehead And The Purpose Of It Is To Showed Total Allegiance To The First Beast Does That Remind you

Revelation 7 Where He Talks About God Sealing His Servants On Their Foreheads Now Let's Pause For To Take In This Scary Imagery One Of The Beautiful Things About The Church Family Is That Regardless Of Your Political Views Your Education Levels Your Economic Status You Are A Son Or Daughter Of God And We Are Able To Love One Another Across Our Differences We're Able To Forge Unity In The World Where Unity Seems Impossible But Now Imagine A World That Is Fully United Regardless Of Their Political Views Their Economic Status Their Educational Levels They Are United To Worship Satan Shouting Who Is Like The Beast And Who Can Fight Against It What

[24 : 54] A Scary World To Live In And How Would The Church Fare In Such A World Chapter 13 Tells Us That The First Beast Waged War Against The Church It Conquered The Church By Power And Authority The Second Beast Caused The Church Unable To Buy Or Sell And Caused The Church To Be Slain Let Me Say Again The First Beast Waged War Against The Church And Conquered The Church By Power And Authority The Second Beast Caused The Church Unable To Buy Or Sell And Caused The Church To Be Slain For For The Christians That Read John's Letter Revelation 13 Is

Not Something That Lies In The Future To Be Feared But It Was The Very Reality They Lived In The Roman Emperors All Like To Assume Titles Of Deities Nero Caesar Referred Himself On His Coins As Savior Of The World It's Pretty Much Like The Blasphemous Names On The Heads Of The First Beast In AD 64 Nero Started A Severe Persecution Of The Christian Church He Burned Hundreds Of Christians Alive And Then Murdered Many Four Years Later There Was A Revolt By One Of The Governors Against Nero And The Governor Took His Throne He Then Took His Nero Then Took His Own Life But Many At First Believe That This Evil Emperor Nero Caesar Was Only Faking His Own Death He Will One Day Come Back To Rome To Take Back His Throne God But As Time Time Time Time Time

Time Time People Shifted To Believe That Nero Will One Day Actually Rise From Dead So In Many Ways Nero Seems To Be The First Beast Who Suffered A Mortal Wound On One Of His Heads Only To Be Healed And Rise Again But On The Other Hand The Christians In John's Time Must Have Felt That The Roman Emperor Is Unbreakable There May Be Revolutions Against The Empire Only To Be Crushed There May Be A New Emperor On The Throne Only To Be As Evil And Any Mortal Wound Will Be Healed And Imperial Worship Will Grow Ever Stronger For The Minority Christians Who Were Able To Escape This Physical Persecution They Then Found Themselves Unable To Participate In The Economic System Of Rome The Reason Is Rome Demands Sacrifice To Emperors And

In Order To Buy Or Sell Everyone Must Obtain A Certificate Of Sacrifice To The Emperor And Without This Certificate Of Sacrifice Christians Were Forced To Commit Economic Suicide And Suffer In Poverty And Salvation So After Nero Then Emperor Domitian When He Was On Throne He Then Built His Own Statue That Is Nearly Eight Metres High And There Was A Legal Tradition Of Executing Christians Who Refused To Bow Down To This Statue It Sounds Sounds Sounds Sounds Sounds Like The Image Of The First Beast That Those Who Do Not Bow Down To It Would Be Slain So How Is God Going To Comfort The People At John's Time Time What Is God's Call For Them In A Time Like That I Remember At Law School I Enrolled In The Law And Religion Class As

A Christian I Was Very Passionate About Arguing For Religious Freedom For Christians In The Workplace In The Public Sphere Because I Felt A Strong Sense Of Injustice That Christians Were Persecuted Simply Because They Were They Refused To Sell Cakes Or Flowers For Gay Wedding And I Was Hoping My Essay Will Make Wake People Up To Their Conscience And One Day They Will Join Me In Defending Religious Freedom For Christians In A Way I Believe That God's Call For Christians In A Face Of Persecution And Suffering I Believe The Only Way Is For Us To Stand Up And Fight For Freedom But Chapter 13 Verse 10 Presents A Totally Different Call A Call That I Was Not Aware Of It Says If Anyone Is To Be Taken Captive To Captivity He Goes If

[29 : 57] Anyone Is To Be Slain With A Sword With A Sword Must He Be Slain God Is Saying That No Matter How Hard And How Smart We Fight Persecution Persecution Remains Inevitable In God's Letter To Church In Smyrna God Says I Know Your Tribulation And Your Poverty But You Are Rich And The Slender Of Those Who Say That They Are Jews And Not But A Sinagal Of Satan Do Not Fear What You Are About To Suffer Behold The Devil Is About To Throw Some Of You Into Prison That You May Be Tested And For Ten Days You Will Have Tribulation Be Faithful Unto Death Does This Not Sound Like Total Defeat Satan Has Won The

Whole World Bounced Down Before It And Those Who Don't Are Inevitably Doomed So God Is Just Telling The Church To Accept Their Fate In Verse Ten I Think The Answer Is No In Fact After God Told The Church In Smyrna About The Suffering And The Persecution That Is To Come God Then Says That He Will Give Them The Crown Of Life And That Is The Same Thing We Seeing Right After John's Vision Of The Two Beasts All Of A Sudden John Said Then I Looked And Behold On Mount Zion Stood The Lamb And With Them 144 Thousand Who Had His Name And His Father's Name Written On Their Foreheads Remember Revelation 7 Where John First Saw The 144 Thousand From Every Tribe

Of Israel And Then He Immediately Saw A Great Multitude Standing Before God's Throne We Have Learned That 144000 Actually Represents The Entire Church And Where Are The Church Standing Here They Are Standing On Mount Zion The Old Testament The Old Testament Has Time Describe Mount Zion As The Place Where Israel Will Look To For Salvation And For Hope Because From Mount Zion God Will Wage War Against The Enemies Of Israel And Now We Seeing The Lamb Standing Right There With His Army That Is The Church So What We Seeing Is An In A Dramatic Change Of Scene The Church Rises From Total Defeat To Glorious Victory Verse Three Of Chapter Fourteen Says No

One Could Learn Their Song Except The One Hundred Forty Four Thousand Who Had Been Redeemed From The Earth What This Sentence Is The Church Was Unable To Buy Anything But Then It Was Redeemed By The Blood Of The Lamb The Church Was Unable To Sell Anything But Now The Church Becomes The Only Institution That Is Able To Learn The Song That They Are Singing To God The First Beast Was Able To Utter Blasphemous Words Against God And Satan's Followers Were Shouting Praises To Him But Now At Mount Zion The Only Thing That Could Be He Is The New Song That The Church Is Singing To God So Loud That John Describe It As The Roar Of Many Waters And The Sound Of Loud Thunder How Did John Describe

The Church Verse 4 Says That They Have Not Defiled Themselves With Women For They Are Virgins What What What This Means Becomes Clear When We Read On To Verse 8 Where The Angel Said Fallen Fallen Is Babylon The Great She Who Made All Nations Drink The Wine Of The Passion Of A Sexual Immorality And How Do We Know That The Church Has Not Defiled Itself With The Worship Of Satan Because We Know That Instead Of Having The Mark Of Satan On Their Foreheads The Church Has The Names Of Jesus And God The Father Written On Their Foreheads Now Let's Pause Again For A Moment And Try To Understand How The Church Rises From Total Defeat To Glorious Victory Is

[35 : 00] It By Power Might And Authority Like How The First Beast Conquers The World Is It By Tricks Seduction Deception Lies Like How The Second Beast Conquers The World No The Church Comes Out Victoriously Because Of Verse 10 Of Chapter 13 If Anyone Is To Be Taken Captive To Captivity He Goes If Anyone Is To Be Slain With The Sword With The Soul Must He Be Slain God God Is Saying The Way We Come To Our Victory Is The Same Way Christ Came To His Victory Christ Was The One Who Went Into Captivity And Worse Than Being Slain With A Sword He Died By The Most Humiliating And Painful Death On The Cross The Church Will Rise

Victoriously Not By Might Power Authority Not By Trick Or Lies Or Seduction Not By Powerful Advocacy For Our Freedom Of Religion The Church Will Rise Victoriously Only By Embracing The Inevitable Sufferings And Persecution Knowing That One Day The One Who Bought Us With His Blood Will Allow Us To Stand In His Presence On Mount Zion And We Will Sing The Songs Of Praise That Is Going To Be Everlasting But The Church Does Not Just Stand Up There As I Said The Old Testament Has Described Mount Zion As The Place Where God Is Going To Make Wars Against Israel's Enemies Who Is Israel's Enemies As We Have Learned In Chapter Twelve Is A Dragon Because In Chapter Twelve The Dragon Tries To Wage War Against The Women And

Now God With The Church As His Armies Are Ready To Wage War Against Satan Then In Verse Six We Hear A Proclamation Of An Eternal Gospel And Eternal Good News It's A Good News That There Needs No More Suffering No More Waiting No More Persecution And No More Tear Because The Hour Of The Judgment Has Come This Proclamation Kicks Off The Battle And The Battle Begins At Verse 14 We We We We See That Jesus With A Golden Crown On His Head And A Sharp Sickle In His Hand Swings His Sickle Across The Earth And The Earth Was Reaped We The Church Are Finally Gathered To Himself Then The Angel Also Swings A Sharp Sickle Gathers The Clusters From The Vine Of The Earth

And Threw Them Into The Great Vine Press Of The Wrath Of God The Vine Press Was Then Taken Outside The City Meaning It Was Taken Outside The Presence Of God And It Was Trodden And We Saw The Blood Flew From It Let's Pause Again And Take A Deep Breath Because We Have Seen A Lot Today We Have Seen The Whole World Worship In Satan The Church Totally Crushed And Then Suddenly The Church Rises Victoriously With Jesus And While The Church Is Being Gathered To God Himself Like Harvest Was Being Reaped We Are Also Seeing That Those Who Worship Satan Are Thrown Out Of God's Presence Troll Them With Blood Yet Make No Mistake About This This Is Not Reserve For The In Time It Is Actually The

Narrative Of The Church Past Present And Future As It Was Happening To The Christians At John's Time It Is Happening To Us Now And It Will Happen To Future Generation Of Christians So What Can We Take Away From This Narrative I Like To Talk About Three Things Firstly God Is Sovereign Even Over Our Suffering And Persecutions Second That God Will Overcome By Embrace The Church Will Overcome By Embracing Suffering And Persecution And Lastly I Want To Address The Infamous Number 666 And Ask What Is The 666 Of Your Life First We Learned That God Is Sovereign Over All Things He Is Not Just In Control Of Our Salvation And The Judgment Of The World He Is In Control Of Even The Sufferings And The

[40 : 01] Persecutions Of The Church We See In Chapter 13 In Verse 5 It Says The Beast Was Given A Mouth In Verse 7 It Says The Beast Was Allowed To Make War On The Saints And Then Authority Was Given To It Over Every Tribe And People And Language And Nation Verse 15 It Was Allowed To Give Breath To The Image Of The Beast What These Are Saying Is That God Is Even In Control Of The Damage Of The Persecution And Suffering By The Beast So Nothing The Satan Does In The World Is Going To Escape God's Control And Just As God Is In Control Of Jesus Suffering On The Cross He Is Going To Be In Control Of Whatever Satan Throws At You So Instead Of Saying That Satan Will Conquer The Whole World Is Actually God Allows Satan To Conquer The Whole World God Instead Of Saying Satan Will Cross The

Church Is Actually God Allows Satan To Cross The Church Then Then We're Going To Go To The Second Point That We're Going To See How The Church Is Going To Overcome By Embracing Suffering And Persecution We Learned In Chapter Thirteen That The First Beast Is Going To Use Might Power And Authority To Crush Us And Whenever We Talk About Persecution Of Christians In Hong Kong We Often Talk About The Persecution Of Our Brothers And Sisters In China How The Bible Is Being Banned And Recently Being Officially Revised Churches Have To To The Party Line Pastors Being Put In Jail And What Is Often Our Immediate Reaction To That Pray For Them For The Persecution And Sufferings To Be Gone For Christ

To Conquer The Authority In China For Christ To Change The Hearts Of Leaders In China And Grant Religious Freedom For All Pray For Hong Kong For Our Religious Leader Or Perhaps We Look To Daniel As Claire Told Us Today In Call To Worship We May Be Praying For Leaders To Be Like Nebuchadnezzar To Have A Change Of Heart But The Truth Is In God's Sovereignty That Doesn't Always Happen And When That Doesn't Happen Let's Not Forget God's Call At Verse 10 Despite Our Prayers Despite Our Efforts To Fight For Religious Freedom Suffering And Persecution Will Inevitably Come In A Very Scary Way And How Do We Confront The First Beast John Says It Calls For Endurance And Faith What

Is The Faith That John Is Referring To I Think It Is A Faith In Revelation 14 That One Day We Will Stand Victoriously With Christ On Mount Zion One Of My Favorite Passages In The Bible Is First Corinthians Chapter 15 Where The Apostle Paul Encouraged Encourages The Church To Stand Firm He Says Listen I Tell You A Mystery We Will Not All Sleep But We Will All Be Changed In The Flesh And The Twinkling Of An Eye At The Last Trumpet For The Trumpet Will Sound The Dead Will Be Raised Imperishable And We Will Be Changed Then The Saying That Is Written Will Come True Death Has Been Swallowed Up In Victory Where Oh Death Is Your Victory Where Oh

Death Is Your Sting The Sting Of Death Is Sin And The Power Of Sin Is The Law But Thanks Be To God He Gives Us The Victory Through Our Lord Jesus Christ Therefore My Dear Brothers And Sisters Stand Firm Let Nothing Move You Always Give Yourselves Fully To The Work Of The Lord Because You Know That Your Labor In The Lord Is Not In Vain The Sufferings And Persecution Often Feel Like An Eternity But Paul Says Endure And In A Twinkling Of An Eye The Trumpet Of The Battle Will Sound And We Will All Stand With Christ In Victory In Glory Of Mount Zion Yes Our Brothers and Sisters In China Are Being Crushed But They Are In Reality Winning The Battle And When Suffering And Persecutions Come One Day To

[45 : 03] Hong Kong To Water Mark Let's Know It Is Our Way To Victory And It Is Our Way To Glory I Have Read Something That Ends With Verse 10 Each Sentence Is About A Potential Persecution Suffering That Is Going To Come Our Way And Each Sentence Is Followed By A Proclamation That What Is Said In The Sentence Is Our Way To Victory Our Way To Glory I Read From The Sentences And May I Invite You To Proclaim In The Bracket Our Way To Victory And Our Way To Glory Okay If Anyone Is To Be Fired To Unemployment He Goes If If Anyone Is

To Be Stripped Of Their Wealth And Possessions To Poverty He Goes If Anyone Is To Be Kicked Out Of Their Homes To Homelessness He Goes If Anyone Is To Be Deprived Of Their Loved Ones Into Deep Sorrow He Goes If Anyone Is To Be Taken Captive To Captivity He Goes If Anyone Is To Be Slain With A Sword With A Sword Must He Be Slain Our Way To Glory And Lastly I Would Like To Touch On The Second Beast Unlike The First Beast That Crushes The Church With Power The Second Beast Uses Signs Wonders Deception And Seduction Which Beast The First Or Second Do You Think Is Currently More At Work In Hong

Kong Let's Not Be Deceived That The Living Room Of Satan In Kevin's Word Is Across The Border In China And Hong Kong Is Only Satan's Backyard Right After The Vision Of The Second Beast John Says This Calls For Wisdom And Strangely He Calls He Gives A Riddle For His Readers To Discern A Man Through The Number 666 And There's A lot Of Scholarly Debates About Who This Man Was Could It Be Nero Domitian Maybe I Don't Know But I Think Instead Of Focusing On Who This Man Was At John's Time Trying To Seduce People Away From God I Think We Should Better Focus On What Is This 666 In Your Life Right Now What Is Seducing You From

Your Total Devotion To God What Is Your 666 Comfort Entertainment Excessive Excessive Drinking Living Living A Life Without Commitment Accumulation Of Wealth Or Possessions Rising To Power And As I Was Studying Chapter 14 This Week I Have To Confess There Cried A Number Of 666 In My Own Life John Says This Calls For Wisdom Prayer For Discernment You Can Ask Your Friend Your Family Members Your Spouse Your CG Ask Them What Is 666 In Your Life And When You Have Identified It What To Do About It I Think The Answer Is The Same As How We Confront The First Beast By Patient Endurance And By Faith

I Like To Quote Again From First Corinthians This Time From Chapter 9 Where The Apostle Paul Compares The Christian Journey To An Athlete's Training Paul Says Do You Not Know That In A Race All The Run Is Run But Only One Receives The Prize So Run That You May Obtain It Every Athlete Exercises Self Control In All Things They Do It To Receive A Perishable Wreath But We And Imperishable So I Do Not Run Aimlessly I Do Not Box As One Beating The Air But I Discipline My Body And Keep It Under Control

[50 : 23] At Finish And For Athletes Is To Stand On The Award Podium And Being Laid On Their Head A Perishable Wreath By A Famous Person Perhaps But Paul Says For Us Is To Stand On Mount Zion Being Laid On Our Head An Imperishable Wreath That Is The Crown Of Life By The Lamb Who Has Redeemed Us By His Very Own Blood Watermark Let Your Heart Be Captured By This Imagery And Picture Yourself As Standing On Mount Zion Receiving The Crown Of Life Meeting Christ Face To Face I Would Like To End With First Corinthians Chapter Nine What I Read In The Flesh In The Twinkling Of An Eye At The Last Trumpet For The Trumpet Will Sound The Dead Will Be Raised Imperishable And We Will Be Changed And The Saying That Is Written Will Become True Death Has Been Swallowed Up In Victory Where Oh Death Is Your Victory Where Death Is Your Sting Thank you.