

Telos, the Greek word meaning end game or complete. It is written in Matthew 24 versus 13 and 14 But the one who endures to telos will be delivered this gospel and the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world as a testimony to all the nations. Then the telos will come. So where do we start? The church cannot stop doing God's mission until we live in a peace-filled community. God's kingdom here on Earth.

So I have a question for. For you. For you all. What do you think of when you think of the end game now? The end game and movies and shows. The end game is full of action and violence and chaos. Think of Game of Thrones or Hunger Games or The Avengers. The end game is the final stages.

Now, when you think of the game of chess, you don't always think of action and violence and chaos. But when you're playing chess and it's down to the last few pieces of the game, it's called the end game. Now, in the game of chess, sometimes you don't actually get to the end game. Sometimes the game is called before you even reach that stage of the game.

Now, when we look at the big story, the big picture of God, there will be an end game as God's story is kind of like a show, a series. And there are six seasons. There is many, many episodes in this show, and it's not a show that you want to try to binge watch. Don't try to binge watch it in a weekend that would not work, but instead, let's do a little recap of God's show.

So season one of God's show is called creation. This is where God created the world and everything in it. It's he. He created the animals in the rivers and the stars in the sky. And he called all of this creation good. Then God creates humans and calls them very good. And God created the humans as stewards or caretakers of all the rest of creation.

That is our job, That is our purpose. And in this season, God is present in the garden, in this beautiful garden, and God is present walking alongside the humans in season to evil, right? It happened so quickly. Season one is like the shortest season ever. It's like God created and then Adam and Eve messed up. They messed up.

They did some things that kind of separated themselves from God. And Cain and Abel came and there is murder. And Joseph's brothers sold them into slavery. The story of Noah, where there's just not very many good people on the earth at all, and God kind of wipes it clean a little bit. This is the season of sin and evil, the time where we're kind of separated by God through the actions of humans.

Now, season three, The Chosen People. This is where God creates this covenant with Abraham and the Israelites, and God promises to bless and save all the nations through Abraham and the descent, descent and Abraham's descendants. This is also where they're waiting for the Messiah. The long awaited Messiah. This is a long season here of this chosen people one.

There's prophets that come along and they warn people that they're straying from God and they kind of come back to God and then they stray and they come back again. This is a long

season. Now we've all watched shows like this, like a show, a series that we really love, and we're telling somebody about it. We're like, Oh, you have to watch this, this show.

It's so good. And they say something like, to you, like, Yeah, I tried it. I just couldn't get past season three, right? This is the season three. And we say things like, you know, just get through season three because it gets better. So season four, Jesus, right. Is a great, great, great season. We have Jesus's birth and Jesus's ministry and Jesus, they're starting to think like, could this Jesus person be the long awaited Messiah?

And of course, Jesus is not what they expected. They expected a warrior king and they got a man who is preaching about peace and love and loving your enemies like nothing what they expected. But then we see this glimmer of hope that we have access to God through Jesus, and we have the cross in on the cross. We have a salvation and then the resurrection.

And we have this access to God's grace like we never had before. Season five, The church, the Season five is about the church and God's mission. It's about the church continuing on the work of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is sent in this season. This this is where, you know, one of those seasons where it gets a little weird, right?

The Holy Spirit comes with like a tongue of fire over people's heads. And we're like, wait a minute, what is happening with this show? But we're in it, right? And there we get this idea of that the Triune God or the Trinity God, the Father, God, the Son, God, the Holy Spirit, and the church continues to do the work in this season, God's mission to restore us back to the garden like state, like God's kingdom being built here on Earth.

And then season six called New Creation Restoration. There's this new heaven and new earth that it's coming and Jesus will return and God will once again walk alongside us here on Earth. It will be like that beautiful garden scene once again. And it's when we look toward the end. The goal now this is like kind of the final season like shows have.

Okay, This is the final season. It's the final episode, but it's an eternal episode. All right. It's a little weird. It it just never, it never ends. So that's the show of God. That is the story of God. And as we look toward the end, we think about this, this idea of looking toward the end. Now, tell those is the Greek word for end goal or complete.

And in Matthew 24, we find these two verses that uses this idea. It says, but the one who endures, these are Jesus's words, but the one who endures to telos, to the end to completion will be delivered to this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world as a testimony to all the nations. Then the telos, the completion, the end will come.

Now, this verse, these two verses are in the middle of Jesus. Talking about the end times, as in the temple will be destroyed and nations will be against nations and Christians will be persecuted. But in the midst of Jesus saying there this end, time is coming, Jesus says, But about the day and the hour no one knows.

Not even the angels in heaven or the sun, but only the Father. And then Jesus says to keep watch, keep watch, like be prepared for the end. We don't know when it's happening, but just be prepared. Keep watch. So here we are. We're at the beginning of our sermon series, The End Game, but we have to start at the beginning.

The church cannot stop doing God's work, God's mission, until we live in a peace filled community. God's kingdom here on Earth. So how do we start working on this? The steering team. Steering team is are the horizons elected lay leaders of our church. They are the ones who guide us and make sure that we're on the right path.

Well, they have created three goals for us for 2023. And then these three goal goals were presented and voted on at our church conference held in October that everyone is invited to. So today we're going to talk about the first goal that we have for our church. And then in the weeks to come, you'll hear more about the other two goals.

So goal number one is continue growing as a Christ centered community, doing God's mission. Now, goal number one seems a little obvious, right? We are a church. I hope that we would be Christ-centered in Matthew chapter six. It's the whole Do not worry section. I love this section of Scripture and Jesus is telling us not to worry because we can't change.

You know, we can't add an hour to our life either way if we if we worry. And then he says, instead of worrying desire, first and foremost, God's kingdom and righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well. So we will focus. I think we're a little head on that. That picture shouldn't be up yet, but that's okay.

So Jesus says, like, don't worry. Instead, focus on God's God's righteousness and kingdom, and we focus on God's righteousness in kingdom. And when we do that, we stay Christ-centered. And I think we're doing a pretty good job at this. We're doing really, really amazing things here at Horizons. We're making a difference in the lives of the next generation.

Every single week we partner with the food bank and Zeeman Elementary Project Hope, of course, supporting two orphanages in India last year. In 2022, the middle schoolers pack to over 7000 meals through Mercy Meals. And then if we show those pictures of the youth again, so here we go, our high school youth, this is their rise, our high school youth.

And what they're doing is they have these sticky notes. And what they're doing. Last Sunday, they wrote down all of the things that they would like to focus on for the year, and they put them up on these sticky notes and then they voted and they decided our high school youth decided that they're going to focus locally and globally on helping those who are dealing with mental illness and those who are leaving domestic violence situations.

That's what our high schoolers in our building are up to. It's pretty cool. And there are a lot of other things that we are doing as a community. And so it kind of seems that our goal is complete, like we created this goal, but like, okay, well we're already doing that check. We completed a goal, but there is more to our goal.

So the second part of this first goal is that we are going to clarify our vision and our mission. So it says we're going to establish three phases. We're going to establish our mission and vision about values, who we are. We're going to create a strategic plan, where are we going? And then phase three, we're going to work toward creating a master plan or a site plan, like how are we going to get there?

What's it going to look like now? A.D. Right, is one of or possibly the most significant New Testament theologians of all time. And he wrote a book called Surprised by Hope. And in the book, he addresses two questions. First question, what is the ultimate Christian hope? And two, what hope is there for change? Rescue, transformation, new possibilities within the world in the present.

So if the ultimate Christian hope is to go to heaven, as many Christians tend to focus on, how does that relate to the second part? The second question, how does that relate to having hope and restoration here? An entry, right, says that if we focus on going to heaven, we sometimes ignore the second question altogether.

We don't work on restoring the world that we're living in here. But then he explains that if the ultimate Christian hope is actually for God's new creation, the new heaven and the new Earth to be here, then these two questions are joined together. Scripture has a lot to say about the new heaven and the Kingdom of God here on Earth.

It does not say Scripture does not say very much, if anything, that the goal for Christians is to go to heaven when we die. Now, this is a lot and we are going to talk about this on the last message page in the sermon series. But in the meantime, we have work to do. We are still doing God's mission.

Horizons has been given something special and we have been working and we will continue to work because of what we have been given. Now only there's only a few of us here who were part of the very original ones that started this church 25 years ago. Only a few of you set up and tore down at Scott Middle School, and then maybe a few more of you were here to write messages on the walls of these walls while this building was being built.

Then some of you came, like right after the building was was opened. A few more of you came years later. After that, most of you were here last year when Horizon celebrated, 25 years celebrated, paying off the debt for this building, which is awesome. And then some of you, like me, just recently joined this established community. But whether you've been here since the very beginning or you've just been here a few months, we have been given a gift.

And not only we've been given the gift of a building and resources and an incredible staff that we have. We've been given the gift of established ministry as an outreach and things that are happening. But we've also been given the ultimate gift of knowing Jesus as our Lord and Savior, knowing Jesus as the way. So what do we do with this gift that we have been given?

That's what our first goal is all about. And to understand what we should or shouldn't do with this gift that we've been given, we can think about Jesus's parable of the valuable coins. You may know it as Jesus and the parable of the talents. This parable is found in Matthew, and it's actually found right after the chapter of Jesus talking about the end times.

Now, this Matthew found in Matthew 25, Jesus is talking about what the Kingdom of Heaven is going to be like, and He says, The Kingdom of Heaven is going to be like a man who is leaving on a trip. And so this man, he calls his servants together and he hands over all of his possessions. So. So to the first servant, he hands five valuable coins, and then to the second servant he hands two valuable coins.

And then to the third servant, he hands one valuable coin. And after this he left. He gave the servants his possessions and he left. And the servant with the five valuable coins, put that money to work. He did business with those five coins and he gained five more. And the servant with the two valuable coins did the same thing.

He. He put the two valuable coins to work. He gained two more coins. And then there's the third servant, the one who received just one valuable coin. He dug a hole and he buried it. So the master comes home and he gathers his servants around. And the first servant, the one who had five valuable coins, said the master.

Look, you gave me five valuable coins. And now here's five additional coins. And the master replied, Excellent. You are a good and faithful servant. So then the second servant came forward and said, Oh, you gave me master, you gave me two coins, and now here's two more. And his master replied, Well done. You are a good and faithful servant.

And then the one who received just one valuable coin, the one who buried it. He came up and he said, master, I know that you're a hard man. And I was afraid. So I hid my valuable coin in the ground. But. But here's my one valuable coin back, and the master replied to him, You evil and lazy servant, I gave you something and you didn't use it.

You didn't invest it. And then it didn't end well for that last servant. So in my naive study Bible, it says that the main point of this parable is of being ready for Christ. Coming involves more than playing it safe and doing little or nothing. It demands the kind of service that produces results. God has gifted horizons, valuable coins, and we have a responsibility to use those that gift to do the work so that when the time comes, we will be ready for the final season of God's show.

We have to have a plan in place or else we will be guilty of burying it, holding on to it for our own benefit because of fear or poor planning. So we will decide who we are and where we are going and how we will get there. This year. And the exciting part of it is, is that we know the kingdom of heaven because we know Jesus and we have a gift that has been given to us.

So I want you to think about how we might use that gift this year. Would you pray with me? Gracious, gracious God, Holy God, Father God, we are so thankful for the gift that you have

given us. We are thankful for the physical things, the building, the space, the chance for us to gather together in this place. What we're thankful for, for more than that, we're thankful for the people that make up the church, that make up the body of Christ.

We're thankful for the staff. We're thankful for the resources that we are allowed and get to do amazing things. So open our eyes this year to see what else you have in store for us and make us so we won't just bury it and hide it away because we're fearful. But help us be brave, help us invest in the future, investing in the community, invest in the next generation. Cut through the power of the Holy Spirit. We know that we can do it, but just open our hearts so that we can hear from you. We say all of this in Jesus name, Amen.