

Jesus' Last Message: "I Come Quickly"

Revelation Series

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Bible Text: Revelation 22:6-21
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Now read from the book of Revelation 22:6-21. Revelation 22:6-21.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. 7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. 8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. 9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. 10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. 11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. 12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. 13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. 14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. 15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. 16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. 17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. 18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. 20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Thus far the reading of sacred scripture.

Dear congregation, the portion I read to you this morning is the great triumphant finale to the book of Revelation and the entire Bible, and the theme that runs through this finale is, "Behold, I come quickly." Verse 7, verse 12, verse 20, "I come quickly." And this morning, we want to look at that theme with four points. First, Jesus' last message, "I come quickly," in terms of its triple assertion, its triple confirmation, its triple warning and its triple invitation. Jesus' last message in the Bible, "I come quickly." We'll look at its triple assertion, confirmation, warning and invitation.

Well, it's been a remarkable journey, congregation, traveling through this amazing last book of the Bible with you for the last two years. If we had to summarize the book of Revelation in three words it would be these, "I come quickly." This chapter is a summary of the entire book and in this chapter you, therefore, have a triple assertion, Jesus referring to himself again and again and again saying, "I'm coming. I'm coming. I'm coming." And interestingly, in all three places of this triple assertion, verses 7, 12 and 20, he speaks in the present tense. He doesn't say, "I will come," but he says, "I am coming. I'm already on my way." And that's the theme of the whole book of Revelation, isn't it? That's the way all the events in this book are described, not as Jesus coming in some far distant future but he's coming, he's on his way, he's on his way in the lampstand, he's on his way in the seals, he's on his way in the trumpets, he's on his way in the bowls, he's on his way all throughout this book of Revelation.

But here he adds this word to it, "I am coming quickly." Quickly. You might say together with me, "It doesn't seem very quick." It must not have seemed very quick to the persecuted church in John's day, do you think? They were looking for relief. They were waiting for the Messiah to come and he didn't come, and here we are 2,000 years later and he still has not come. And we've said all throughout this series of sermons that this book of Revelation is for the church of all ages, so how are we to understand this? He says, "I'm coming quickly," but he doesn't seem to be coming quickly. Well, Peter already warned about this back in 2 Peter 3:4, "that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?." Scoffers saying, "It seems like it's taking a long time."

Well, let me illustrate the answer and I think you'll get it. When we speak about war today, we speak about getting our troops ready, for example, to go into Iraq or Afghanistan or to some other world crisis as we seem to have so many in the last few months. We need to understand that though our friends are expecting us to come to deliver them, it takes a long time, a long time to get things ready, an equipped military with power supplies and weapons and tanks and all sorts of things are needed before a war, a foreign war can really be undertaken. And often we hear, "Why isn't the President doing more?" Or, "Why isn't our nation doing more?" And we fear, our friends fear that we're never going to come.

Well, that's just a small example but enlarge that a thousand-fold and then think about this, Jesus Christ has a great deal to do to prepare for his Second Coming, far more than any earthly war. Matthew 24:14, for example says, "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Christ's elect, think about, from his elect church from every nation, everyone whom the Father has given the Son to save, and everyone for whom Christ died on Calvary's cross, everyone, this entire massive undertaking of a multitude no man can number needs to be gathered in, needs to be prepared to meet the Lord before Jesus comes. There's a great deal to do and the conversion of one soul is a more stupendous work than the creation of the entire world, as the old divines used to say.

So it is absolutely true that he is coming but remember that for God one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. He is coming. He's on his way. His footsteps are on the stairway of our lives. But for our reckoning, it seems like a long time. And then we need to understand the massiveness of his Second Coming. We also need to understand, secondly, the difference between the Second Coming and what is often called today the Parousia. This has become a theological word to describe the appearing, the actual appearing of Jesus Christ in the great day. And of course, there's a great overlap between his returning and his appearing but the Bible speaks about both and the book of Revelation speaks mostly about his returning. He's on his way. He's on his way. Suddenly he shall appear, and when he appears that appearance shall just be the conclusion of his return.

So the message is we don't know exactly when he's coming back but we do know he's already coming back. He's on his way and that's a tremendous comfort, you see, to know that every step in our lives is a footstep of Christ coming, coming, coming, in our personal stairway, as it were, leading us upward to glory step by step, leading all of history to the final consummation, the eschatology of all things. And this very triple assertion in the last chapter of the Bible, therefore, ought to encourage us, ought to quiet us, ought to comfort us if we are true believers. When we feel like panicking, when we feel like the world is spinning into chaos, we ought to quietly hear him coming and ought to know that he will soon appear, know that the glorious day is coming. Three times he says in the very last chapter, "Behold, I come quickly." He will not fail.

Now this triple assertion is strengthened by what I'm calling a triple confirmation, and if you open your Bibles with me here I think it will be helpful to you. A triple confirmation. First, our attention is drawn to the authenticity of the doctrine of Christ's Second Coming. Look at verse 6. Put yourself in the moment here in the place of the Apostle John, "he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." John hears a voice, a voice of an angel that runs throughout this chapter, and yet it's the voice of Christ. It almost seems like two people talking at once. If you had a red letter edition Bible, you'll find that in several red letter edition King James Bibles there are different red letters. It's hard to know sometimes who's speaking here, the angel or Jesus. It's almost like two people speaking with one voice. Is it the angel who refuses John's worship or is it the divine Christ who expects John's worship? Who is speaking?

Well, one of the old divines says in his commentary the light is so bright here in Revelation 22 that it is very difficult to distinguish who is speaking at one time. You see, it's almost like he's saying when you look into the sun it's so bright you can't see clearly. It's almost like you might see two people in front of you at once. You hear the audible, you see the visible. It's overwhelming the sheer light and power in this vision. But one thing we know, the message is indistinguishable between the Christ and the angel, and the message is this, "These things are faithful and true." The message is all that the book of Revelation has said comes from the holy prophets, literally the Lord God of the Spirit of the prophets who has sent his angels to show his servants the things which must shortly be done and these things are faithful and true.

So we have here a clear statement of the authenticity, the infallibility, the inerrancy of this book of Revelation and by extension of the Bible itself. We're told here that this is really true. It's confirmed. He's coming quickly because it's the very sure word of God. You see, we don't believe these things because they seem to be helpful and comforting or because they're nice ideas or because they cheer us up and comfort us, the first reason we believe that Jesus is coming back is because it is the word of God and that word is always true. It's as simple as that. Francis Schaeffer used to speak of the authority of scripture as true truth. It's infallible. You find the living Word here magnifying the written word, saying this is absolutely true.

And this is so desperately needed today, this conviction, this confirmation. Last four or five trips I've taken, I've spoken to five different Mormons and a few different Roman Catholics and a few other people as well who sort of noncommittal and every single one of them when I pin them down, every single one of them did not believe in the infallibility and inerrancy of the scriptures. My dear friends, we're living in a day, we're living in a day when men attempt to downgrade the written word often in favor of the living Word and so I don't know if all the Bible is true, I do believe in Jesus, and they exalt Jesus they think but when you de-exalt, when degrade the word of God you are degrading the Son of God. And so here you find in the last chapter of the Bible the living Word, Jesus Christ, is magnifying the written word. He says, "All that I say in the written word is absolutely God's truth. I come quickly." It's confirmed.

Secondly, we have another confirmation here because the second advent of Jesus is imminent. Look at verse 10, "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." Now that seems mysterious at first sight but it's actually fascinating because you recall all throughout the book of Revelation how do we understand it? We go back, you're probably tired of hearing me say this, we go back to the Old Testament. It is always drawing from the Old Testament. Well, here once again. Daniel was really the Old Testament equivalent of John on the isle of Patmos, and Daniel was an exile in Babylon much like John was an exile on Patmos, and there's all kinds of parallels between their two prophecies. They're both apocalyptic literature. They both have visions and dreams and so on. But Daniel, interestingly, is told three separate times to seal up the prophecy of his revelation because the time is not yet. God is saying, "These things are yet in the distance future, Daniel, so seal them up. They belong to the

end times." But here God says to John the exact opposite, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book for the time is at hand."

"I come quickly." It's confirmed here. It's imminent. Now that always generates the question and we preachers get that question all the time from people wherever we go, "Do you believe that we're living in the last times?" And I don't mean to sound facetious in my answer but our answer must be, "Yes, we're living in the last times and we have been living in the last times for the last 2,000 years." That's what the Bible says. "I come quickly." We're in the gospel age and this gospel age says to us, Romans 13:11, "now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." So the church from the day of Pentecost to the coming again of Christ in the clouds is always teaching, and rightly so, we're living in the last times. "Be ye always ready for you know not when the Son of man shall come."

Boys and girls, it's like when you're in school and your mom is getting you off to the bus and she says, "It's nearly time to catch the bus. It's high time for you to get up. You must get out of bed now." That's the motivation spiritually, you see, that you find in Paul's epistles, you find here in John in Revelation. The time, Paul is saying, is now. These are the last days. Christ is on his way. His return is imminent. It's high time to awake out of your sleep and to get on with putting on Christ and his righteousness first and putting off sin and the old man. We need this exhortation, you see. It's a confirmation and an exhortation at the same time. The time is at hand. And there are some of you who need this exhortation in a big way because you've never repented of sin, you've never truly come to the Lord Jesus Christ. You need to awake out of your sleep for the time is at hand. You are sleeping when you should be awake.

But then there's a third confirmation here and we might just call this the finality of the Lord's return. You find that in verses 11 through 13, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." You see, verse 11 is a summary of all human destiny. It indicates there's a fixedness about the eternal state that the good and the evil will find themselves in upon Christ's return.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: he that is holy, let him be holy still." In other words, when Christ comes there are no second chances, no further opportunities for repentance on the one hand, and on the other no further possibility of backsliding in apostasy. When he comes everything is fixed forever. Hebrews 9:27-28 puts it this way, "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So," as there is this relationship between death and certainty of judgment, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." My friend, if your life is not a looking for him, he will appear the second time without sin to your damnation, but if your life is a true looking for him and you're longing for him and you look for his appearing and you love him and your

heart goes out to him, you wish you knew him better, but you can say this, "I'm a looker for Jesus Christ," he's coming the second time without sin to your salvation.

Are you willing to entertain his presence at the eternal Lord's Supper of which this Lord's Supper, the coming Sabbath, is but a type of the one to come? So what you need for this Lord's Supper is what you need for the eternal Lord's Supper. You need to be a looker for Jesus Christ. If you're not a looker for Christ, if you don't long for Christ, if you don't hanker after his appearing in your own soul, in your own life, and even on the clouds, you don't belong at the Table of the Lord. People who have been wrought again by the Holy Spirit, who have been born again by his grace are people who are made lookers for Jesus Christ.

You see, he's coming back the second time without sin not to redeem new people but to reward. When he comes back there will be no further opportunity to repent and be saved and so you can't say, you can't say, it's self-destructive to say, "Well, I'm going to hope for the best and wait and see." A wait and see game with God is so dangerous because it will lead you into everlasting condemnation. You must know what it means to repent and to believe the gospel by the grace of the Holy Spirit. You must know the Savior or you will perish.

But you say, "But how do I know? How do I know if I know?" Well, John tells us repeatedly in his first epistle that we may know that we know him by the fruits of our lives because we will love him, he says, and we will keep his commandments. In other words, our sanctification, the work of the Holy Spirit in us that bears fruit in our lives gives evidence of our justification that we're saved and washed in the blood of Christ, and that's what you notice in verse 14, don't you? "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Now it's quite amazing, this was one of the very very few places in the Bible where there is a real debate among the ancient manuscripts of what is the right word to translate here. The King James uses "commandments" but there's another word in many manuscripts that simply says this, "Blessed are those who wash their robes," which, of course, refers to justification, that in all our depravity, our filthy-ragged righteousness we are brought to Jesus Christ and we are clothed with the white robe of his righteousness and find in him all our salvation. But either way that this is interpreted, what this text is basically saying is this: if you have recourse to a Savior and you are justified in him and you've washed your robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and then you bear the fruit of obeying his commandments, loving him, walking in his ways, you belong not only at the earthly Lord's Supper but you will be included in the eternal Lord's Supper to come in heavenly glory.

And those who are not justified and not sanctified, if you lack these marks of grace, at least not being in a process of sanctification, you will be excluded. You will be shut out. You're shut out by preaching from the earthly Lord's Supper and you'll be shut out by the King of kings from the eternal Lord's Supper. That's what he goes on to say in verse 15,

"For without are dogs," outside of these people who are not included in verse 14, we are but dogs "and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and we love and make a lie." That's what we are by nature but by grace we're justified, we're washed and we're sanctified.

So here you have a triple affirmation and a triple confirmation. You have the authenticity of his word, you have the immanency of his return, you have the finality of that return, and every one of us must be prepared for that great and glorious day.

"I come quickly," is both a warning message and a comforting message and so intermixed in this chapter is also a triple warning. There is, first of all, in verses 7 through 9 a warning against disobeying God's word, "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." And then John falls down before the angel in a deep sense of worship but the angel says, "Don't do this." It's of great concern, you see, that we obey the word of God and worship only God. And you see here again as we see throughout earlier in the book of Revelation the importance of focusing all our worship on the living God. When you come to the Lord's Supper, you don't come to be seen of men, you don't come because of a minister or any other person, you come in the presence of Almighty God. You worship God. You meditate on Jesus. That's the only way and here we are warned against worshiping anyone but God, against disobeying the word of God. You see, if you worship someone else, even if it's an angel, God is a jealous God we read in the 10 Commandments, and no angel can take his place. God is jealous that he gets all the worship. No man. No angel. You'll only be disappointed in all men, even ministers in the end of the day but in God you'll never be disappointed. And so in the Lord's Supper we hear the echo of Revelation 22, worship God alone.

Secondly, there's a warning against sealing up the word of God, verses 10 through 17. This message, the message of Revelation, by extension the message of the Bible, is not to be silenced and one day this message will be fulfilled. "Behold, I'm coming. I'm coming." And so don't wait, don't wait to test this message. Don't try to silence this message. Don't postpone this message. Don't be like the foolish five virgins who knocked at the door when it was too late. That's the warning. Don't seal up the word of God. The word of God is broken open before you. Jesus is coming. You need to respond to that word. You need to bow before that word. You need to believe that word.

Then thirdly, there's another warning, a warning verses 18 and 19 against tampering with the word of God. You see not only a warning against disobeying it, 7 to 9, and again sealing it, 10 through 17, but against tampering with it. Don't add to it, verses 18 and 19 say, and don't subtract from it. That's what Paul said already in 2 Corinthians 4, don't tamper with the word of God.

Now what I find so fascinating is that this last warning of the Bible follows right on the heels of the last invitation of the Bible. It's set in the context of evangelism. The whole gospel, a whole Christ, to the whole man, verse 17, must be proclaimed. "Come. Come. Come," is the message to all men but in the midst of that God says don't add anything to that, don't take anything away from that. You must swallow, as it were, the whole word

of God. You must believe the whole word of God. This is your solemn responsibility. This is your salvation. This is your life. Everything is in the word of God that you need to know for this life and for a better.

You know, the story is told of the famous Puritan preacher John Rogers who preached in Dedham in England that his congregation was not responding, not taking seriously the word of God and so one day Rogers got on the pulpit and he impersonated God and he said, "I'm going to take my book away from you." And he closed the Bible in the pulpit and he tucked it under his arm and he started to walk away. Then he came back and he fell down actually in front of the people on his knees and he impersonated the people and said, "Please don't take it away! Take anything else away but don't take the word of God away from us! We want the whole word of God!"

Thomas Goodwin was present in the audience and he was overwhelmed, especially when Rogers then looked at the people and said, "Well," impersonating God again, "then I will give my word back to you one more time. I'll watch to see what you do with my word, whether you will obey my word, whether you'll be a people who will live on the basis of every word that comes out of my mouth." Thomas Goodwin said he walked out of church that day, he went over to his horse and he hung on the horse's neck and wept solid for 15 minutes that he might be such a man who would feed on the whole counsel of the word of God. You see, if you're a proper attendee at the Lord's Supper, you don't just love the Lord Jesus Christ, you love the word that tells you about the Lord Jesus Christ and you long to obey that word, you want to embrace that whole word, you don't want to add to it and become a legalist, you don't want to subtract from it and become a liberal not only literally but you want the whole word also applied to your conscience. You want to say with Thomas Goodwin, "Make me a man that feeds on the whole counsel of God."

The Puritan Henry Smith said, "We should set the word of God always before us like a rule and believe nothing but that which it teacheth, love nothing but that which it prescribes, hate nothing but that which it forbids, and do nothing but that which it commands." The word of God is sufficient, my friend. If you live by that word and not just by your feelings, all shall be well. John Flavel, another Puritan, said the scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying.

Hear the warning from the last chapter of the Bible today. Don't tamper with the word of God. Don't put anything above the word of God. Don't seal the word of God. Don't disobey the word of God. But then finally we have this wonderful amazing invitation, a triple invitation in verses 16 and 17, coming from the root and offspring of David, Jesus, the bright and morning star, "the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Charles Spurgeon says about this invitation, this invitation is placed at the very end of the Bible because it is the sum and substance, the aim and object of the whole Bible. It's like the point of the arrow and all the rest of the Bible is like the shaft and the feathers on either side.

There's a triple invitation here. First of all, there's a welcome invitation. It's actual the welcome of the church. When the Spirit and the bride say come, they're not talking first and foremost to the unbeliever but they're actually talking to Jesus. Many people get this wrong at the first part of this invitation. It's the welcome of the church. It's addressed by the Spirit's indwelt church to the Lord Jesus Christ. The church is saying, "Lord Jesus, come. Be coming." "You say I'm the coming one, I'm the one who's coming quickly." "Lord Jesus, do come quickly no matter how inconvenient it is for me, no matter what plans might be frustrated. Be coming, Lord. The bride and the Spirit say, Be coming. He that hears says, Be coming, Lord Jesus."

Can you say that this morning, "Be coming, Lord Jesus"? Is it your sincere desire that the Lord Jesus will come in your life, come on the clouds, come for the people of God not only individually but corporately, come to make all things right that have been made wrong, come to make the crooked stick of church history straight, come to redeem all things for himself among his people and to cast away the wicked forever? "Behold, I come quickly," said Jesus, and the church echoes, "Then come, Lord Jesus." You see, come.

John Calvin said, "The Christian who does not hanker to be with Christ forever has made little progress in the Christian life." Are you hankering for Christ to come? He which testifies these things says, "Surely I come quickly," and John adds behind it, "Amen, come! Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

May I ask you a few personal questions this morning? When did you last pray for the Lord Jesus to come on the clouds? Have you ever hankered for his Second Coming? Do you really want him to come? And not just to come to get you out of some temporary troubles and trials but do you want him to come because you want to be with him forever? Have you ever said in truth, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"? That's a mark of a child of God. Though we can't say that all the time but every believer knows times where he can say that, "Come, Lord Jesus."

You see, this is a welcome invitation, welcoming Christ to return, but secondly, it's a wide invitation, "whosoever will." You can't get any wider than that, can you? You know, there are some preachers in the high Calvinist movement who say, "The gospel's only offered to sensible sinners. You've got to be sensible before you can really preach the offer. Then you've got to hold back somewhat, you see." Well, praise be to God that the Reformers for the main part preached not only the gospel offered to sensible sinners but also to insensible sinners, to come and to abandon their worldly ways, to come as they are with all their sin, and to flee for mercy, to come in repentance and faith.

"Whosoever will." You see, the problem we have by nature is our will and we make all other kinds of problems why we can't come to Jesus. We have all kinds of excuses and objections but the real question is this: are you willing to lay down your life for Jesus' sake, willing to come to him?

Some people say, "Well, I can't come because I just can't understand the plan of salvation." Well, in this invitation there's nothing here that says you can't come because you can't understand it. There's plenty of people who've received Christ by faith by the Holy Ghost who haven't fully understood the way of salvation as they came. Yes, you'll come to more understanding later but the problem is not your understanding, the problem is your will.

And some of you who are unrepentant and haven't come to Jesus say, "Well, I can't come because I can't repent as I would. My heart is so hard. I can't even bring one tear to my eye." Again, the problem is not with your heart here being hard, the problem is with your will. You won't come. You won't come. You need to pray, "Lord, make me willing to come. Make me willing to repent." It's not that you want to be converted so badly, it's that your heart is rejecting it because your will is opposing it. Do you want to be self-sufficient? You don't want to lay down the weapons? You won't want your will broken before God Almighty?

Then there are other people, I'm sure also here, sitting here this morning who say, "Well, I can't come because I'm too great a sinner. You won't believe what skeletons are in my closet. Certainly I cannot be saved." Well, that's not what the text says. The text says, "whosoever will, let him come." There's no reference here to any past life. There's no reference to any mountain of sins that are too great to pay.

Then there are still others who say, "But I cannot come, I cannot believe, I cannot do as I would." But Jesus invites you not according to what you can do but according to what you will do. Cast yourself on his mercy and say if mercy must cast me out, mercy must cast me out, and mercy will never cast you out.

And then there are still others and they say, "Well, I can't come because I'm unworthy." But you see, the Bible doesn't say whosoever is worthy, let him come. It says whosoever will, whosoever, little sinners, big sinners, black sinners, old sinners, young sinners. Whosoever will, let him come.

So the question is are you willing to be saved? Are you willing to forsake sin? Are you willing to take Christ to be your Master from this day forward? Are you willing to be washed in his blood? Are you willing to be made truly happy in the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you willing to come? It's a wide invitation. It couldn't get any wider. The only people who are excluded are those who exclude themselves because they refuse to come.

And finally it's a wooing invitation. It's not only a welcoming invitation and a wide invitation but a wooing invitation. It just goes over and over again, doesn't it, "Come. Come. Come." It's a pressing wooing invitation. The welcome of the church to a coming Christ and the invitation of the gospel to lost sinners go together in the gospel. The Spirit and the bride say come, but also "let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." You see, friends, we all need the water of life desperately. Water is absolutely essential. You can get along without food for a while but not without water. Every single human being whether he admits it or not has a soul thirst

for Christ. Every single human being feels some kind of emptiness within. We try to drown it out.

But here there is water of life in Jesus Christ and it's free. "Let him take, let him take, come and take the water of life freely." Isn't that amazing? What would you think, boys and girls, of a man going on a personal vacation to the Sahara Desert and he took everything he needed along with him except water? You'd say that man's crazy. He's lost his mind. He's going to go through the desert without water. Well, my dear unconverted friend, that's exactly what you're doing when you go through the desert of this world without the Lord Jesus Christ.

He says come and take. He doesn't say bring and buy. He doesn't say merit and then come. He doesn't say there are conditions for you to meet to come. He says come, come, come and take freely and he presses it home in our consciences. It's a pressing invitation. It's Christ himself speaking. It's his last word to us in the Bible. It's the last invitation and one day the last invitation will come in your life as well.

And he presses it home in all directions, "Come. Come. Come." You know what it's like to be pressed by somebody to do something, don't you? You get an invitation perhaps in the mail or someone phones you or you get an email and you say, "Well, I don't know if I'm going to go." You kind of ignore it, then someone calls you and says, "Are you coming?" And you kind of avoid it, and then someone knocks on your door and says, "Aren't you going to come? I'll pick you up. Come." And you feel pressed to come. Well, that's what Jesus is doing here. He's pressing you, pressing you personally.

Martin Luther speaking about the promises in the gospel invitation said, "I'm so glad, I'm so glad that this invitation is not addressed to me personally, Martin Luther, you can come, because I'd always be looking over my shoulder to see whether there was another Martin Luther in the world. It doesn't say Martin Luther, it says whosoever will, and my name is included in whosoever will," Luther said. And so is yours.

So friend, come and drink. Come to the bloody tree on which Christ paid the ransom price. Repent at the base of that tree. Believe on the Son of God alone for salvation and trust and commit your soul to him and by the grace of God be saved. Come.

It was said of George Whitefield that when he was preaching and lost a train of thought and he didn't know what to say for a moment, he'd fill in the blank with saying, "Come. Come. Come to Jesus Christ." An enemy said that of him but in truth many people did come, hundreds, thousands came to his free offer of the gospel and this is the way the gospel must be preached. This is the best way to end a sermon, the best way God ends the Bible, he comes with a wooing, pressing invitation.

Some of you have heard hundreds of those invitations, maybe thousands, and you still have not come. You still have not come. You've come to church faithfully, you've come under the sound of the gospel, you have a Bible, you read the Bible, you know the Bible to some extent but you don't come. All the books of the Bible, all the prophets of the

Bible, all the apostles of the Bible, all the threatenings of the Bible, all the promises of the Bible gather themselves together up to this one point that you are called to come, freely come and take of the waters of life. But you refuse to come and you could die today and then the dreadful words of verse 11 will be your portion, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still." The day of your death God closes the book of his invitations never to open it again, and so he urges you, he pleads with you, he beseeches you to come to his Son in the very last page of the Bible.

"Let him that is athirst come. Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." The Old Testament ends on a curse. The New Testament ends with a gloriously free invitation, "whosoever will, come." Will you not cry out in your own soul today with the poet, "Just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidst me come to thee. O Lamb of God, I come, I come." Such coming sinners will always, always find grace. "He who cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Why? Because, because of Acts 5:31, because the Prince and the Savior of this world comes to give repentance and faith and forgiveness of sins, because it's the very grace of God that draws you to come that that coming will never be turned away.

So at the very end of the Bible in the very last word we read simply these words, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Do you understand it? You're called to come. You can't come but he draws you to come and you're free to come and take, and as you come he gives you grace to come. It's all of him. The invitation is grace. The coming is grace. The fulfillment is grace. The gospel is grace. The Lord's Supper is for people who say, "It's all grace, free grace, sovereign grace, one-sided grace from beginning to end. O Lamb of God, I come, I come." Amen.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly and teach us to come to thee for the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with us, and may it be with all of us. O help us, Lord, to come and freely take the riches freely offered to poor sinners. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

SUNDAY MORNING

6/15/14

Dr. Joel R. Beke

Votum and Salutation

Psalter 50

Reading of the Law of God

Scripture Reading:

Revelation 22:6–21

Reading of the first part of the

Lord's Supper form

Prayer

Psalter 303

Sermon Text: Rev. 22:6–21

Jesus' Last Message: "I Come Quickly"

1. *Its triple assertion*
2. *Its triple confirmation*
3. *Its triple warning*
4. *Its triple invitation*

Psalter 4:3-5 (standing)

Sermon Conclusion

Closing Prayer

Psalter 42:4, 7, 10

Doxology of Praise (pg. 415)

Benediction

SUNDAY MORNING

1. *How are we to reconcile Christ's promise of coming quickly on the clouds with His apparent lack of doing so for 2000 years? (point 1)*
2. *How does verse 12 teach us that Jesus is not returning to redeem sinners but to reward saints? (point 2)*
3. *What three warnings does Jesus' last message present us with, and how are they applicable to us today? (point 3)*
4. *How do the welcome of the church to a coming Christ and the invitation of the gospel to lost sinners go together? (point 4)*
5. *How have you responded to the pressing invitations of the gospel in the Book of Revelation? (point 4)*
6. *What have you learned biblically, doctrinally, experientially, and practically from hearing the book of Revelation preached for the last few years?*