The Great Invitation — Delivery Transcript

Revelation 22:6–21 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, December 11, 2022 · *The Returning King*

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Thanks to the team for leading us in worship this morning. If you have your Bibles, you can open them to the book of Revelation, chapter 22, as we finish the journey we've been on in this book for the last several years and bring to a conclusion looking at its final words or its famous last words. And as we're thinking about the last words of the book of Revelation, it's interesting to think about the last words of several individuals. Your last words are pretty important. If you've ever given any last words, you wouldn't be here today, so you don't know what yours are.

But it's interesting if you look back in history what certain people have as their last words. It shares a lot about their personality, a lot about their priorities a little bit about their character. I did a little Google search of famous last words and I was pretty shocked by some of the things that I read. Benjamin Franklin, his famous last words, his daughter was telling him to turn on his side. He was obviously suffering from breathing problems and things of that nature. And so she says, "Hey, Dad, turn on your side."

And I don't know how she said it, but it must have got under his skin because he said, "Honey, a dying man can do nothing easy." And so I hate that was his last words to her, but that's what they were. The last words of Pete Maravich—is that how you say his last name? Pistol Pete. Does anybody remember his last name? Maravich, is that right? He died while playing basketball, believe it or not. And his famous last words were, "I feel great."[1] So I think it's kind of funny. Groucho Marx, his famous last words were, "This is no way to live."

And so he stopped living. Winston Churchill, his last words were, "I'm bored with it all." And then Leonardo da Vinci, this is interesting, his last words were, "I have offended God and mankind because my work didn't reach the quality it should have." Leonardo da Vinci. So Mona Lisa, you know. That's what he thought. Unbelievable. It shows something about a guy's personality, it shows something about his priorities. And so if that's true of our famous last words, how much more so would it be true of the last words of Jesus, the last words of the Scripture—which I believe when Scripture speaks, God speaks— and so these are the last words from God to his people and to us, his creation.

And it really isn't surprising that the famous last words of Scripture would be words that constitute an invitation. Every Sunday morning when we get done with the service, we put forward what's called the invitation time. And the invitation time is a time of response where you can take what God has spoken to you through His Word and react to it or respond to it. And that's what happens here at the end of the book of Revelation. It is an invitation, the final great invitation for sinners to come and experience salvation and for God's people to come and rest in him.

So let's read the text. Starting in verse 6 of chapter 22, we're going to read all the way to the end of the chapter, and then we'll look at these final invitations. "Then he"—being the angel that had been talking to John about heaven and all sorts of other things—he says to John, "These words"—that I've been giving you; probably the whole words of all the Revelation —"These words are faithful and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place. 'Look, I am coming soon.

Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.' I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. When I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had shown them to me. But he said to me, 'Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you, your brothers the prophets, and those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!'" I don't know if you picked up on this, but it starts out with the angel talking, then it jumps to Jesus talking, and then it jumps to John talking.

So the angel says the words are faithful and true. Jesus says, I'm coming soon, and John says I fell down and worshipped an angel. Whoops. Then the angel said to him, "Don't seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near. Let the unrighteous go on in unrighteousness, let the filthy still be filthy, let the righteous go on in righteousness, and let the holy still be holy." Jesus comes back in verse 12: "Look, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me to repay each person according to his work.

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are those who wash their robes so that they may not have the right—so that they may have the right to eat from the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and

practices falsehood. I, Jesus, have sent my angel to attest these things to you for the churches. I am the root and descendant of David, the bright morning star.

Both the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' Let anyone who hears, say, 'Come!' Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life freely. I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if anyone takes away from the words of this book of the— if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city, which are written about in this book.

He who testifies about these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.'" To which John replies, "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with everyone. Amen." So the final words of Scripture, the final words of Jesus constitute an invitation for sinners to find salvation. And it's a reminder, whether you look at the very end of the book of the Bible or the very beginning book of the Bible, the book of Genesis. God's heart has always been a missionary heart. He's always been evangelistic in his impulses. He's always inviting people to come to him.

And when he chooses a people and when he saves a people, the express purpose of that salvation is so that they might be a light to the world, a welcoming party, ushering others into that same grace. Our God is a missionary God. Sometimes I'll say things like, God did not create a mission for his church. We kind of think of it that way—you know, he started with the church and then he created a mission for us. That's really not true. God created a church for his mission. Fundamentally, God has a mission to bring people unto himself, to bring people into the joy that is in him.

But he needs a people to be a light to the nations to bring those people in. And that's what we see here at the end of the book of Revelation. A missionary God making a missionary appeal to the peoples of the earth. And the great invitation falls under these two big headings. These are the two headings of chapter 22 and really the two headings of the book of Revelation. Number one, God's words are reliable and true, so you can trust them. And number two, Jesus is coming soon. Now, what we mean by soon, we'll need to define here in just a few moments.

But God's words are true, and Jesus is coming soon. Those pillars are what support these final invitations in the book of the Revelation. And I'm going to list out seven of them. I know that's a lot. We'll try to hit them quickly. But these seven final invitations really are a summary of the whole book of Revelation. It's interesting when you get to the last part of a book of the Bible, oftentimes in that epilogue it'll summarize all the major themes of the book that you've been reading. And it is certainly the case with the book of Revelation.

We see major theme after major theme. Sandwiched here right at the end, and it's an invitation for God's people to rest in him and for those who are not to repent and believe. So the first invitation is in chapter 22 verses 6 and 7 the angel says to John, "These words are faithful and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place." So he's establishing the trustworthy nature of the Scripture, right? He's saying "the God of the spirits of the prophets" as a way of saying God is the one who inspired the authors of Scripture to perfectly record what he wanted his people to know.

And so it's not that the men were infallible. But God is infallible, and an infallible God caused fallible men to perfectly record what he wanted them to say. And since the words that we have are from God and they are dependable and faithful and true, our response is to keep them or obey them. Look at verse 7. Jesus says, "I'm coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." And so the first invitation is to keep God's word or to be obedient to God's word.

And it's the first invitation that was actually given in the very first chapter of this book. In the very first verses of this book, in Revelation chapter 1, verses 1 to 3, he does the same exact thing that he does in chapter 22, verses 6 and 7. He establishes God's word as faithful and true. He says it's coming from the Lord. He testifies to his own participation in that, and then he pronounces a blessing to anyone who hears the words, keeps the words, and speaks the words. Blessed is the one who reads them aloud, blessed is the one who hears, and blessed is the one who keeps.

What's interesting, when you get to chapter 22, he doesn't talk about hearing or speaking. He only talks about keeping or doing. Because the speaking and the hearing has already been done, right? We've gotten through all of the speaking and all of the hearing. Now we're right at the very end. And so the only thing left for God's people to do as it relates to his word is to keep it, to trust it as a trustworthy source of his revelation, and to not just see it and read it, but to put it into practice.

And if you'll do that, there's a blessing attached to your life. And so as we end the book of Revelation, I just want to share with you as your pastor to you, my congregation, there is a blessing of God that will visit your life when you simply read the scriptures and do what they say. Read the scriptures and do what they say. Even when it's inconvenient, even when it doesn't always make sense, you will find God's blessing visit your life in unique and profound ways when you simply trust him enough to do what he says in his word.

Now some of us don't do what God says because we don't read the Bible. Some of us don't do what God says because we did read the Bible and we don't like what it has to say. And so it's a challenge on both fronts, both to read the word, to hear the word, but also to trust God

enough to do what he says. To keep doesn't just mean to obey, it means to have your mind shaped by its truth. I love this quote by Dennis Johnson in his commentary on Revelation.

He says that Scripture "is not a passive cadaver waiting for curious medical students to dissect it in their quest for information, but rather it's a living, double edged sword that proceeds from the mouth of the triumphant Son of Man and pierces the thoughts and intents of our hearts. It is a hammer that shatters. It is a seed that grows. It is rainfall that never returns to its giver without accomplishing the mission on which he sent it." Scripture has a job to do in us. There really is power in the Word of God.

That's why our church is committed to what's called expositional preaching, where the main point of the sermon is the main point of the text, because the preacher isn't inspired; the Bible is inspired, and so if a preacher can just re-present what God has already presented in his word, then God will use that word to shape and grow his people, and he will bless his people who are committed to doing his word. So be obedient to the word. That's invitation number one. Invitation number two, be true in your worship. Look at verses eight and nine.

John says, "I heard and saw these things, and when I heard and saw them I fell down and worshipped at the feet of the angel who had shown them to me." How much do you think it pained John to write those words? There I was, and I saw the glory of God and I worshipped an angel instead. "But he said to me, 'Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you, your brothers— I am a fellow servant with you, your brothers the prophets, and those who keep the words of this book.

Don't worship me. Worship God!'" Now what's so funny is this is the second time John has made this mistake. He makes the same mistake in chapter 19, where he sees the glory of Christ and all of these visions and the destruction of Babylon, and he gets so caught up in that moment, he falls down and he worships at the feet of the angel. And again, in that time in chapter 19, the angel says, get up, don't worship me, worship God. Now, why does John mention it both times? Is he just a glutton for punishment?

Does he just like making himself look bad? Perhaps. I think more likely John is communicating to us that worship, who and what you worship is a major theme of the book of Revelation. And who and what you worship matters because who and what you worship ultimately determines everything else about your life. And so it's an invitation from God to his people to be true in our worship, to not worship the creation, even good things in the creation, like angels and servants of God, but to rather worship God Himself. Idolatry is a funny thing.

It comes in many shapes and sizes. I don't think many of you probably go home and worship Satan. If you do, you fooled me, you know. But if you don't worship Satan, it doesn't mean you're not a worshiper of idols. Just because you don't bow down to some wooden statue of

Krishna in your kitchen doesn't mean you're not a worshiper of idols. It doesn't mean you're true in your worship. Idolatry comes in many shapes and sizes, and for many people, especially in America, especially people who have prosperity and wealth, their worship is a little more subtle.

In fact, the most seductive idols are the most subtle. And it's a gradual shift from worshiping God with all of your heart to worshiping the American dream. For men in particular, it's worshiping your job, it's worshiping a title, a position, a level of income that gives you stability and security. For a lot of mothers, the idol is the safety of your children, the security of your family. And if I have to compromise on my morals or if I have to compromise on doing what God wants me to do, I'll compromise so long as my kids are okay.

Is safety for your children a good thing? Absolutely it's a good thing. I'm not saying you should not have safety for your children as if you're a mother. Of course you should, but it's not the ultimate thing; it's not the most important thing. And there may come a day where you have to choose: am I going to worship God by releasing my children to go overseas and serve as missionaries, or am I going to reject that call and worship my family instead? For young teenagers, a lot of times it's not money or family, it's pleasure, it's popularity, it's the opinion of my boyfriend or girlfriend or my peers at school.

And so if I have to quit going to church or have to quit reading my Bible or if I have to quit worshiping God so that I'll be accepted by these people, I'll just do it for a season. You know, I'll just kind of do it in their eyes, even though secretly God knows we're still cool. That's idolatry. It's making a good thing, friendship with your peers a good thing, an ultimate thing, and it supplants the worship of God in your life. The most seducing forms of idolatry are also the most subtle and God will have no part of it.

That's what he's saying here in the book of Revelation. What you worship, who you worship determines everything else about you. So worship God alone. And notice how kind he is in his rebuke, this angel. John has made this mistake twice, and the angel doesn't thump him upside the head or kind of come down on him. He just says, get up, John, worship God. And in your life, the Lord is kind, he is patient, he will not beat you over the brow. He is slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, but he will not tolerate idolatry.

It is not good for you, and because it's not good for you, he won't promote it in your life, but he will gently call you back away from that and back to a pure worship of himself. So be obedient to his word, be true in your worship. Thirdly, be public with God's truth. Verse 10, the angel says to John, "Don't seal up the words of the prophecy of this book." Don't seal them up. Why? Because the time is near. Interestingly, in Daniel chapter 12, which so much of Revelation 22 pulls from Daniel 12, but in Daniel chapter 12 he says to Daniel, "Seal up the words of the book."

And remember, for John in Revelation chapter 10 he says, "Seal up this part of the book." But now here at Revelation chapter 22 he says no more sealing, no more concealing, let it be known. Preach it off the rooftops. Why? Because the time is near. And so it's a reminder for us as God's people to be public with God's truth. To not hide it under a bushel—no, I'm going to let it shine—to be public with your faith in Christ, to be public with the truth of Christ as it's revealed in the scripture.

In our culture, in our day and age, people are okay if you're religious in your religious sphere, but do not bring your religion into the public sphere. That we have a sacred secular split in our culture. We're fine if you want to be a Christian at church on Sunday, but don't bring that into the workplace; don't bring that into your company and your public relation policy. Certainly don't bring that into politics. And here is a call from Jesus in Revelation to say don't listen to them. Listen to me. Be public.

Be unashamed with your commitment to Christ. Why? Because the time is coming. The time is near. Time is running out. And there will be a time where change will no longer be possible. Look at verses 11 and 12. Verse 11 says, "Let the unrighteous go on in unrighteousness, let the filthy still be filthy, let the righteous go on in righteousness, and let the holy still be holy." This again is coming from Daniel chapter 12, where he says, "Many will be purified, cleansed, and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand."

So he's presenting two camps. And he's kind of describing these two camps as settled concrete. So once the wicked have passed a certain threshold, there is no hope. And the wicked are going to do what the wicked are going to do, and the righteous are going to do what the righteous are going to do, so it's imperative while the time is available to make the truth public so that you can reel them back from their fixed state of damnation. You remember C. S. Lewis had this beautiful quote that every one of us are on a trajectory.

I'm going to butcher the quote, but essentially he says there are those of us who surrender to Christ are in a process of sanctification and we are going to become creatures that are so glorious that if we were to look upon them now it would blind us like the light of the sun. That's how glorious some of us will eventually become because we're on a trajectory of glorification. On the other hand, he says there are those who are rejecting Christ, they are habitually engaging in sin, they want nothing to do with God or salvation, and they are also on a trajectory.

And when that trajectory completes itself, when they get to their final destination, it will be a creature that is so horrid that to look upon it now would be a creature that is so ugly you would not even see it in your nightmares. He said it much more beautifully and poetically than I just did. But that's what John's saying here. The time is running short; eventually

they're going to cross a threshold and so say it while the saying is good, preach it while the preaching is good, and reel them back from the pit.

And this is true in your life as an individual, by the way. I remember when I was growing up, a preacher would say, if you hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, do not harden your heart. This may be the last time you have to hear God's voice because if you harden your heart over and over and over and over again, there will come a day where the voice doesn't penetrate anymore. If you are feeling conviction in this moment, if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, that is a gift of God's grace in your life that will not be there forever.

The time is coming when change will not be possible. The time will be up. And so make the truth known. And if you hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, don't harden your heart. Which leads to the next invitation, verse 12. Jesus says again, "Look, I'm coming soon, and my reward"—or my recompense—"is with me to repay each person according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to eat from the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates."

So the fourth invitation is an invitation to be prepared for the judgment of God. Christ is coming soon, and when he arrives, so also does the day of judgment. You've heard the phrase payday someday, you've got to pay the piper sometime. What does that payday look like? Well, according to Jesus, when he comes, we're going to give an account for the lives that we have lived. And so how do we today prepare for that day? We prepare for that day by being careful on the way that we live in this day, the attitudes that we carry, the actions we engage in, the relationships that we maintain or don't maintain, the words that we speak, the things that we do matter.

And they should matter to us because it matters to God, and it matters to God because there's coming a day when Christ returns that we'll give an account. That we'll stand before God and we will give an account for every idle word that we spoke, every sinful action that we've ever done. All the stuff that you're proud of, you know, there's rewards in heaven when done in the right spirit for the glory of Christ, but everything that you're ashamed of, that you swept under the rug, that you hope no one would ever ask you about, that is just between you and God—it'll be between you and God and everyone else in the world, because you'll give an account on the day of judgment.

So live today in a way that makes you prepared for that day, and the greatest preparation you can make is what he describes as washing your robe. And earlier in the book of Revelation, the robes being washed were an indication that someone had repented of their sin and put their faith in Jesus as Lord. Washing your robe was what the theologians call justification where you get— "Just as if I'd never sinned" is a way to think about it. I'm cleansed. It's as if

I had never done any wrong, not because of good I've done, but because the perfect sinless life of Jesus Christ has been imputed to me and my sinful life has been imputed to him.

He bore my sin and he clothed me with his righteousness. That's justification. That's having your robes washed. But in chapter 22, he doesn't use it in the passive voice. He uses it in what is called the active voice, which means you wash your robe. And what he's saying is not you earn your salvation through your works. He's not saying that at all, but he is saying, I'm going to judge you according to your works. That justification is a gift of God's grace. Sanctification in a way is still a gift of God's grace.

It is God who works in you to will and to work according to his good pleasure, but you are still required to participate, work out your salvation, wash your robe, participate in this process of you becoming holy and who God wants you to be. That's how you prepare for the day of judgment. And those who wash are blessed, and those who don't are not. Our works do not save us. We're not saved by our works. But the works do give evidence to our salvation. It is a balance. Faith and works.

James says, "You want to show me your faith? I'll show you my faith by what I do." Faith without works is dead. And we have got to hold that tension as God's people. That salvation is a work of God from beginning to end. It is totally by God's grace. But God's saving grace is a sanctifying grace. It's not just a justifying grace, and it will transform you in the way that you think, live, and do. And if that transformational element is not present, then your confidence should not be present. Your works are an evidence of your salvation.

If there is no transformed life, then there is no evidence of Christ's presence in you. Dirty robes are mentioned in verse 15. He says, outside the gates, those who are dirty don't get into the gates, the gates are the gates of heaven. They're outside. Who are they? They're the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. I think it's interesting he says the dogs. First time I read that I thought, oh I guess there's no dogs in heaven. But that's not what he means.

He doesn't mean like literal dogs. Except for maybe pit bulls, because you can't really trust a pit bull, so you don't want to let them into heaven, but I'm just I'm totally joking. Those of you who have pit bulls. But you better pray for that dog. He's not talking about literal dogs. He's talking about dogs in the sense of it's a euphemism, in other words, in the Old Testament the Jews would call the Gentiles dogs. You guys remember in the Gospels when Jesus is going about his way and a woman, a Gentile woman, comes up to Jesus and pleads with him to heal her daughter.

She has nothing left. She's gone everywhere. She's done everything. Her only hope is for Jesus to heal her daughter. And Jesus says it is not wise—or it is not good—to give the dogs what is holy. It's kind of shocking. You're like, "Wow, Jesus. You can't talk to girls like that."

He wasn't just being totally rude and crass. It was a euphemism for saying, my calling is to the Jews first. Just like Paul said, it's the gospel "to the Jew first." I've come for my people, and those who are not my people, they referred to as the dogs.

And so this is John's way of saying, in heaven are God's people, and outside of heaven are not God's people. He calls them dogs and sorcerers and so on and so forth. And it's a reminder that we need to be prepared for the day of judgment because when that day comes, you're one or the other; there's not any in-between. You're one or the other. You've got to be prepared for that day, which leads to the fifth invitation, verse 16. "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to attest these things to you for the churches.

I am the root and descendant of David, the bright morning star." "Both the Spirit and the bride"—the Holy Spirit and the bride, that's the church—they say, "Come!" They're talking to unbelievers, they're talking to the world. "Let anyone who hears, say, 'Come!'" Talking about individual believers that hear the gospel, they respond. Now they're inviting other people into the glory of heaven and the grace of Christ. "Let the one who is thirsty come." Remember that to receive salvation you've got to admit your thirst. God doesn't save people who don't need saving. He saves people who recognize their desperate need for him.

"Let the one who desires take the water of life freely." The invitation is an invitation to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. It's given— actually, it's given to all, but it's only accepted by those who recognize their thirst. Who have a hunger and thirst for righteousness that is outside themselves that they cannot produce in and of themselves and who are willing to surrender and be satisfied in Christ and Christ alone. They've drunk from these broken cisterns, they've not been satiated by the things of this world, and so they come to Christ and find a satisfaction of the desire that they have lived with for the entirety of their lives.

They finally have that desire quenched and satisfied in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the way that he describes himself is so interesting. Jesus says of himself, I'm the one making the invitation, I'm the root and descendant of David, I'm the bright and morning star. In verse 13, I'm the Alpha and Omega,[2] I'm the first and the last, I'm the beginning and the end. Jesus is not confused as to his glory and to who he is. He is not unclear about why he's worthy of worship and he's painting us a picture for why satisfaction and contentment and salvation will be found in him if we would just repent and believe.

When he says that he's the root and the descendant of David, that's somewhat Old Testament language, but he's saying I was the root. I was before David began. I'm eternal. I'm like there's David, there's David's dad, there's David's granddad, his great-great-great-great-granddad, and then there's me, way before any of that. I'm eternal. I'm before any of that, but I'm also the fulfillment of the promise to David that your kingdom will be forevermore. Jesus is saying, not only am I way, way, way, way, way back in the very, very

beginning, but I'm also way, way, way, way in the future, fulfilling the promise that of his kingdom there will be no end.

I'm the eternal king. When he says that he is the Alpha and Omega, he's saying the same thing. He's eternal. There is no beginning or end in him. When he says that he's the beginning and end, it's tempting to say, well, he's just saying the same thing a different way, but he's actually saying something deeper than that. These words, beginning and end, are the Greek words arche and telos. They're packed with philosophical significance. We don't have time to drill it home too too much. You've heard the word archetype. An archetype is like the perfect ideal, the perfect representation of a thing.

Superman is an archetype of a hero. So the archetype is like the blueprint. It's the ideal representation. It's the source. It's the source from which all the other ideas and details come. Jesus is saying, I'm that source, I'm that blueprint, I'm the very beginning, I'm the idealized representation, not just of heroes, but of everything good. And then he's also saying he's the telos. And that's the Greek word for end, but not end as in the end of a story or the end of a pencil. If I was to say what's the end of a pencil and you said, well, it's the eraser, or it's the graphite tip, I would say yes, that's not wrong, but that's not really the end of a pencil.

The end of a pencil—does anybody know the answer to this question? The end of a pencil is what? To write. What a bright class. It's to write. And the end of a car is to drive, and the end of food is to eat. Tell that to your one-year-old. The end of all things, Jesus is saying, is me. I'm the purpose, I'm the reason, I'm the fulfillment, I'm the final destination. Everything in this world, all of creation, all of human history, all of your love stories, all of your beautiful art, all of your songs, all of your fantastic meals, all of your joy, all of it ends in me, begins in me, points to me, fulfilled in me, I'm the beginning and the end.

I'm the arche and the telos. As Paul says in Romans chapter 11, verse 36, "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever." Again, there's no sacred secular split. There's no, like, Jesus box and other-thing box. It's Jesus. He owns the whole box, he is the whole box, and everything good in this world that draws us to its beauty and goodness and nobility, it's ultimately drawing us to Jesus himself because he's the beginning and he's the end. And then he describes himself as the bright morning star.

This is the star—I think most astronomers say it's Venus—that shines the brightest when the night is the darkest, and the bright morning star is the only star left shining when the dawn comes. If you don't stay up all night and you don't live in the country, you don't really know what's going on here. But the bright morning star—Jesus is basically saying when night is at its darkest point, look up, see me, I'm the brightest shining star, and when you see me, know that the night is about to end. Now when you see the bright morning star in real life, you've got about four hours, five hours left of night.

But it's a promise. It's a promise that the night is coming to an end and the dawn is going to come. And with the bright morning star, when the dawn does come, all the other stars begin to disappear, but one star remains. And what star is it? It's the bright morning star. And Jesus is saying, I am that star. I will remain. I am the end of night. I am the only thing that remains. I'm the beginning and the end. So why would you not take me up on my invitation?

Why would you reject me? When everything you desire, everything you've been looking for, all of the deliverance that you crave in life begins and ends in me. It's also no surprise that the Spirit and the bride say come. The one who hears says, "Come." People who experience the life-changing grace of Jesus are people who invite others to experience the same. The church experiences the life-changing grace of Jesus and they invite others to do the same. And here is Jesus himself saying, if you're thirsty, come. If you desire, come. It's a reminder of what C.

S. Lewis said in his book, Mere Christianity. If you have a desire in your life that nothing in this world can satisfy, maybe you ought to wake up to the fact that you were not made for this world and your heart was not made to be satisfied by things in this world. But you were made for another world, a world that is to come, and the only one who can satisfy your heart is the maker and Lord of that world, and that is Jesus Christ himself. An invitation to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Very quickly, the final sixth and seventh invitations, which we don't have time for: the sixth is to heed God's warning. Verses 18 and 19: "I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city, which are written about in this book." A sobering warning, a warning that reminds us of the importance of God's word.

That when Scripture speaks, God speaks. It's not just true of the book of Revelation, although you don't want to toy with the book of Revelation, like a lot of YouTube prophets do. But it's also a reminder that you don't want to pervert the word of God from Genesis to Revelation, which you see a lot of people do in our day and age. You get on TikTok and you got people twisting scripture and making it say things that it doesn't actually say. And what it does is it reveals in that person who or what they really worship.

And if you have to twist the words of Scripture so that you can believe in God, you don't believe in the God of the Bible. You believe in your own God. Maybe you think you're God and you're worshiping yourself, but you don't worship the God of the Bible if you're taking away and adding to what he's revealed in his Word. What you believe about the Bible shows a lot about what you believe about God. Believers love the Word, they obey the Word, unbelievers don't. They hate it, they disobey it, they reject it.

So what does your relationship with God's Word say about you? If you never engage with the Bible, maybe it's an indication God is just a dressing. He's just an appendage. He's a Sunday, he's a Sunday add-on. Some of you read the Bible, but you twist what it has to say because it makes you uncomfortable. What does your relationship with the word say about you? Finally, the final invitation, verses 20 and 21. "He who testifies about these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.'" That's Jesus speaking. John replies, "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!"

And then he says to everyone reading this book, "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with everyone. Amen." So the final invitation of Revelation is for God's people to pray for Christ's return. He says, I'm coming soon, which people scoff at that and say, what is soon? It's been 2,000 plus years. Did John get it wrong? Did Jesus get it wrong? Did Paul get it wrong? Well, it's not like they didn't expect Jesus to come in their lifetime. They did. It's very clear that they expected him to come in their lifetime.

So they might have been wrong in that expectation, but they were not wrong in saying that he's coming soon. You just have to define soon a little bit differently than maybe we're used to. If you put it on the grand scheme of everything, creation of the world, book of Genesis, choosing of Abraham, Israel, Gospels, Death and Resurrection, Ascension, church age, I guess on that timeline you could say it's soon. It could also— this is the way I take it: it's soon in that any generation can see the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

It could happen in our generation. It could have happened in their generation. All the things that need to have happened for that to happen have already happened, and so in any generation the recipe is there. The rise of godless authoritarian evil, false religion, the falling away of the saints, the persecution, the falling away of the world, all the things that we looked at in the book of Revelation, it's all possible. And so our generation could be the generation that sees the coming of the Lord, and so we need to be ready.

Whatever his reasons are for not coming, we know one of them, 2 Peter chapter 3, is because he's waiting for people to repent. The reason he hasn't come today or yesterday is because there are people who he has appointed to eternal life who have yet to take his invitation. Second Peter 3 says, "The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance." And so that invitation is an invitation for you if you're not a Christian to not delay.

He is not delaying; he will come, but if he's delaying, one of the reasons for his delay is so that you might repent and believe. And for us as the church, Broadview Baptist Church, it's an invitation for us to pray. Maranatha. Even so, come Lord, come now. Come and get us. Come and make it new. Come and set things right. But as we pray that prayer, may we never let loose the other invitation, which is not just to pray, "Come, Lord," but to also say to the nations, "Come to Jesus as Lord."

We pray to Jesus, come and get us. We say to the nations, come to Him and find salvation. It's a tension. And you've got to hold that tension as we move forward into uncertain days, pleading with the unreached peoples of the world to come to Christ and be saved, pleading to your unchurched, unchristian neighbors and friends. Come to Jesus and find salvation. And praying to our Lord Jesus Christ, come, even so, Lord, come. We eagerly await your appearing. And so this morning, if you're here and you're not a Christian, the invitation is open for you to come and experience salvation in Jesus' name.

If you're watching online and you've never made a personal commitment to Jesus as Lord and you have no confidence of your salvation, this morning the Holy Spirit speaks to your heart and says to come repent of your sin and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. If you've never made that decision public in your life, there's an opportunity for you as Taylor leads us through a time of response to come forward and say, I need to give my life to Jesus. Or maybe for you it's baptism. You have not been obedient to the Lord in that area of your life, and this morning is the invitation to heed the word of God in your life.

You've been resisting being obedient to the Lord. Maybe it's not baptism, maybe it's something else. You know, we all have areas of our life of compromise, and this morning is an invitation to bring your life into perfect alignment with God's will as revealed through his word and to experience the blessing of being obedient to what He's asked you to do. For those of you who are longtime members of our church, you're committed to what God's doing here, I also want you to pray for what God wants to do in and through our church for the nations.

As we enter into our December World Missions offering, we can all participate in praying and sending and going. And so would you ask the Lord to show you what his invitation looks like on that front for you as we respond in this time of invitation? The altar is open. You respond as the Lord leads. Father in heaven, we thank you for this time this morning. And we do pray that we would be a people who hear your word and take you up on your invitation. We thank you for your promised blessing on us when we choose to do that.

We pray for our own hearts to be courageous and bold in sacrificing what needs to be sacrificed and letting go of the things of this world in exchange for something far better, far more satisfying. And so would you give us wisdom to know what that looks like practically and courage and faith to do it. And we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "I feel fine"; Maravich's last words, spoken to James Dobson during a break in a pickup game on January 5, 1988, just before he collapsed, were "I feel great." Source: Los Angeles Times, "He Was Doing What He Loved, Playing a Game" (Jan. 6, 1988). ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "In verse 11"; "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" is Revelation 22:13. Source: Revelation 22:13 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩