

**10/09/22      “Christ’s Final Reminders”  
Revelation 22:13-21**

Welcome...

Last words are important words. Indeed, last words are intended to be lasting words, words that make an impression, they expose the purpose, the anguish, the peace, the rage, the pride, and the joy of those who utter them. A person’s last words most often will stay with the listener or the reader.

This morning we come to the last words in the book of Revelation, and the last words of the Bible. God’s written Word comes to an end, and so what we find here is of utmost importance to God. It also should be of utmost importance to us. Christ final words are important words, and The Revelation of Jesus Christ ends with five glorious reminders of the Lord’s character, His work and His plan.

**Let’s read Revelation 22:13-21...**

**Main point: Christ ends Revelation with five glorious reminders of His character, His glorious work, and His wonderful plan.**

<b>Christ’s Control is Absolute</b>	<b>22:13, 16</b>
<b>Christ’s Cleansing is Essential</b>	<b>22:14-15</b>
<b>Christ’s Invitation is Free</b>	<b>22:17</b>
<b>Christ’s Word is Complete</b>	<b>22:18-19</b>
<b>Christ’s Return is Certain</b>	<b>22:20-21</b>

My prayer is that you will satisfy your thirst in Jesus Christ, that He will be the first love of your life, and you will believe all His promises, and joyfully be a faithful messenger to others.

**I.      Christ’s Control is Absolute**

Verse 13...

Jesus identifies Himself first as the Alpha and the Omega. In the Greek alphabet Alpha is the first letter and Omega is the last. Notice that is what Jesus says next, that He is “the first and the last” and He is “the beginning (the source of all things) and the end (the goal of all things). This threefold description describes the completeness, timelessness, and sovereign authority and absolute control of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ’s terms Alpha and Omega, first and last, and beginning and end are also reminders that history is His Story and it is linear. By linear I mean that there is order and sequence: first, one, then two, then three, or A, then B, then C, or in the Greek alphabet Alpha, Beta, Gamma, all the way to the Omega. It is a linear, sequential unfolding of a story. Eastern religions like Buddhism and Hinduism, follow a cyclical view of history going on and on in a perpetual cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, or reincarnation. They may get this from looking at the cycles of nature, the cycle of seasons — spring, summer, fall, winter, and then back around to spring — around and around.

Linear history has a purpose, moving us to a destination, which is Jesus Christ. He says in our text He is coming soon. We have to hear that with the truth of eternity that is coming to all of us, whether spent in Heaven or Hell. This life that we are living right now is a mist, a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes. After that comes eternity.

James Joyce, tries to capture eternity when he writes, “You have often seen the sand on the seashore. How fine are its tiny grains! And how many of those tiny little grains of sand go to make up the small handful which a child grasps in its play. Imagine a mountain of that sand, a million miles high, reaching from the earth to the farthest heavens, and a million miles broad, extending to remotest space, and a million miles in thickness; and imagine such an enormous mass of countless particles of sand multiplied as often as there are drops of water in the mighty ocean, or atoms in the vast expanse of the air: and imagine that at the end of every million years a little bird came to that mountain and carried away in its beak a tiny grain of that sand. How many millions upon millions of centuries would pass before that bird had carried away even a square foot of that mountain, how many eons upon eons of ages before it had carried away all? Yet at the end of that immense stretch of time not even one instant of eternity could be said to have ended. At the end of all those billions and trillions of years eternity would have scarcely begun.”

It is chilling to read that and think about people spending eternity in hell. That is the very thing that God sent His Son Jesus to deliver us from, to bring us over from death to life, from darkness to light, from an eternity in hell into an eternity of heaven. Jesus is coming soon to execute wrath and judgment on His unbelieving enemies and to reward His redeemed saints. It is the final act of linear history that God planned from before the foundation of the world.

Christ was the Alpha, the first day of history. John 1:3 tells us through Jesus, all things were made, and without Him, nothing was made that has been made. Through Jesus, God spoke the universe into existence. Jesus is also the middle day of history. The cross of Christ is at the center of human history to divide time into BC — before Christ — and AD — after the death of our Lord. He will be the final day when His Second Coming ends human history. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. His control is absolute.

Christ further identifies Himself in His own words in verse 16. In Revelation 22:16...

Jesus makes it clear that it is not the apostle John but Jesus Himself who is the real author of Revelation. The expression “I, Jesus” appears only here in the Bible. And in an astounding, seemingly paradoxical statement, Jesus declares Himself to be both the root (ancestor) and the descendant of David. Jesus is the eternal one. In His deity, Christ is David’s root (He is David’s creator); in His humanity, He is David’s descendant.

In verse 16, Jesus describes Himself as “the bright morning star.” To call someone a star was in biblical times (as it is today) to exalt him. Numbers 24:17 says, “A star shall come forth from Jacob, a scepter shall rise from Israel” (Num. 24:17). Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:19 “the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.” In Revelation 2:28 Jesus promised to give the overcomers at Thyatira the “morning star” - that is, Himself.

As the morning star announces dawn’s soon arrival, so Jesus’ coming will herald the end of the darkness of man’s night, and the glorious dawn of His kingdom.

Christ’s first reminder is that He is in absolute control. His second final reminder is:

## **II. Christ’s Cleansing is Essential**

Verses 14...

The cleansing that Jesus worked by his blood is essential. Without it, we would have no right to enter the city. The washing of the robes represents salvation through Christ’s atoning blood. Sin pollutes and defiles us; it makes us dirty in the sight of God. The soiled garment is a symbol of a sinful lifestyle, the actual deeds done in violation of our consciences and of God’s law.

Because of God's holiness, Habakkuk 1:13 says, "Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You cannot look on wickedness with favor."

God cannot look at us clothed in our filthy sin-covered garments. Our polluted robes must be washed by the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. This represents our salvation, our cleansing, our justification in the sight of God, our forgiveness of sins through simple faith in Jesus. The multitude from every tribe, language, people, and nation in Revelation 7:14 has done this: "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Christians stand in radiant robes of righteousness given as a gift through faith in Christ. God sees us that way — not guilty, but holy.

This is like the beautiful statement to husbands in Ephesians 5:25-27, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless." That is what Jesus did for His bride the church. By living and dying for her, He has cleansed her; by the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, He has washed her and made her righteous and clean.

Verse 14...

We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, so we have the right to eat from the tree and to go through the gates of the New Jerusalem. Jesus has won for us rights and privileges that were not ours. The Greek word "the right" refers to authority, a legal right to act in a certain way. When Adam ate from the tree, in him we all sinned. God said in Genesis 3:22-24, "'He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.' So the LORD God banished Adam from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. Man was not permitted to go back in the garden to eat.

But those who have experienced the washing from sin that marks salvation in Christ will forever have the right to the tree of life – praise the Lord! As it says in Romans 5:1-2, "...since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand." We have access, we have the right to go into God's presence. We have the right to be called children of God, as John 1:12 says: "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, he gave the right to become children of God." We have the right of adoption, to be called God's heirs. God has graciously given us the right to the tree.

Colossians 1:12-14 says it beautifully: "giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

We are qualified for heaven. Isn't that exciting?! To be qualified for heaven is so much better than being pre-qualified for a loan! In Jesus Christ, you are qualified to go through the gates and reach out your hand and take and eat from the Tree of Life, and live forever. Is that not incredible? Jesus paid for that.

But outside are the dogs. Revelation 22:15 says...

Dogs in those days were not pleasant, domesticated animals that are members of the family, beloved and grieved when they die. The term refers to wild, junk-yard-type dogs, rabid, prowling around, like wild boars. I remember a missions trip to Mexico where the most scary threats were the wild dogs on the streets.

Who are the dogs in verse 15? Those who are sorcerers. The Greek word is *pharmakeia* — the corruption of drugs and black magic, and the dependency on drugs to try to satisfy our thirst for pain free life. But medication and drugs by themselves do not address the heart and the underlying emotions which trouble the mind and spirit. That is why biblical counseling is so important, as Jesus said in John 8:31, to know the truth of God and the truth will set you free.

Also on the outside: the immoral. The Greek word is *pornea*, from which we get our word pornography. We live in a corrupt age with countless sexual perversions. Again, trying to satisfy one's thirst and hunger by pursuing sexual immorality will lead to a fruitless life and ultimately spiritual death. Next he says murderers: Jesus said it is not enough to not physically murder somebody, but if you are angry with them in your heart, you are in danger of the fire of Hell. Idolaters: anyone who sets a created thing above God, and lives for that created thing, rather than God who made them. Those who love and practice lying. All of these are excluded.

We need to be aware, to know, to understand these words. We need to take heed we are not being deceived in pursuing those things, but also warn those who are living this kind of life that they are in great danger and they need to repent and worship and follow Christ.

So, we saw in verses 13 and 16, Christ's Control is Absolute. Second in verses 14-15, we saw in Christ's Cleansing is Essential. Third,

### **III. Christ's Invitation Is Free**

Revelation 22:17 says...

This is the great invitation of Revelation. It could be said to be the great invitation of the Bible. It is a fourfold invitation to all persons of the world to come and be saved. - The Holy Spirit says come! - The Bride, the Church of Jesus, says come! - The one who hears is told to come! - The one who is thirsty is invited to come. All who desire the eternal living water of life are invited to come and be saved without price because Jesus has already paid it all.

This is Jesus' final invitation. He is pleading with thirsty sinners to come to Himself and be satisfied in salvation.

And did you notice that it is not just Jesus who gives the invitation. Verse 17a...

The Holy Spirit is in partnership with the bride — the church. Together we have a role, to invite thirsty sinners to find salvation in Christ.

Three Scriptures come to mind related to this invitation. John 7:37-38 says, "On the last and greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice [with thousands of Jews around], "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." Jesus called on thirsty sinners to come to Him, to believe in Him and find eternal refreshment, to find life. It is an invitation for anyone who is thirsty to take the gift of the water of life freely — without money.

Isaiah 55:1-3 says, "Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance. Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live."

Matthew 11:28 says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

To come to Jesus is to believe in Him. If you do, you will rest and never be hungry. You will never be thirsty. To come to the waters is to believe in Jesus, to trust in Him for the forgiveness of your sins and the granting of His righteousness.

Sin makes us thirsty. Being spiritually dead but still physically alive is a thirsty place to be. You violated God's laws and your conscience, which leaves you on the outside. The sin is not satisfying but only makes you more thirsty, like drinking salt water. You need Jesus Christ. You need forgiveness, His grace and His Word. If you are on the outside, you are in danger; John 3:36 says you are under the wrath of God. If you die in that condition, you will go to Hell forever, but He is inviting you to come, drink, and He will satisfy you forever.

Believers, those who have already come to Christ, we are to participate in the invitation, to be inviting others. As Jesus said, we are to be fishers of men. Some of you love fishing, whether trout fishing, bass fishing, or deep-sea fishing. Others of you do not like either the process or the product.

But the Lord's kind of fishing is different. And with our culture getting darker and darker, we are positioned like Esther, "for such a time as this," to be a light for Jesus and share the gospel.

But evangelism is hard for Christians. I have struggled to faithfully share the gospel my entire Christian life. It is a challenge. But we can pray and spur one another on in our mission to know Christ and to make Him known. Being part of a Community Group is a great way to encourage each other and help each other to be faithful witness for Christ.

In our flight to Washington D.C. last week, I had the aisle seat, Paula the middle seat, and a gal named Nichole had the window seat. Paula introduced herself and found out that Nichole was a defense contractor working with inertial navigation and GPS systems. So, Paula was not quite sure how to start the conversation about Christ. So she said, "navigation systems are designed to get us to a destination. True north will always point us to God and to His Son. For Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the life no one comes to the Father except through Me."

They talked the entire flight, but Nicole was not that interested in spiritual things,

On our flights back to CA we had a two-hour layover in Memphis. We met a young lady from Malaysia named Francine and when we started talking about Christ, she told us that she is a believer and when she told us her amazing testimony, all three of us were in tears.

Then a gentleman named Richard came and sat next to us, and I thought oh good now all three of us can team up and share Christ with him! Turns out Richard was a Christian too.

When we landed in Dallas, Paula and I sat down to get a bite to eat, and a flight attendant named Mellissa sat next to us. We started talking with her about Christ and she too was a believer. At the end of the conversation, she cried and thanked us for being an example of a witness for Christ.

Friends, we are simply tools in the hand of God to be used where and how He sees fit. We are strategically positioned and poised to invite thirsty people to come and drink, to find deep, rich, full satisfaction without money, without cost. Christ's invitation is free.

#### **IV. Christ's Word is Complete**

Christ's Word is complete. Revelation 22:18-19 says...

This is the very end of the Bible. These words go beyond the book of Revelation. God intended that Revelation would be the capstone of written Scripture, His final word, the end of what He has to say.

The apostle John — the same person who wrote Revelation — said at the end of his Gospel, in John 20:30-31, “Jesus also performed many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

No one comes to faith in Christ apart from the ministry of the Word of God. You do not think or reason your way to Jesus; you hear the Gospel proclaimed from the Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 says that the Bible is given to make us “...wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work [holiness, evangelism, ministry].” Scripture is given to bring us to faith in Christ and then to make us fruitful.

Revelation 22:18 warns us - referring not only to the book of Revelation but to the whole Bible - not to add to it nor take away from it. Verse 18 warns “If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city.” The Word is perfect, sufficient to save our souls and give us a fruitful life for the glory of God. We do not need anything more.

This is an ancient warning. Deuteronomy 4:2 says, “Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.” Proverbs 30:5-6 says, “Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.”

Satan always seeks to interfere with the Word of God. He said to Eve, as though simply raising an innocent question, a topic for discussion, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” ... You will not certainly die [a lie]. For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil [the truth].” Satan is behind all cults, constantly mixing truth and error together, creating one big mess.

We preach verse by verse, book by book because I we want to teach all Scripture. Jesus said in Matthew 4:4, “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” It is a lifetime work to become proficient in the Word of God. It contains milk and meat. Harmonizing all of these Scriptures, line after line after line, into a system of truth, is hard to do. But that is your lifetime work.

Christ’s Control is Absolute	22:13, 16
Christ’s Cleansing is Essential	22:14-15
Christ’s Invitation is Free	22:17
Christ’s Word is Complete	22:18-19

## V. Christ’s Return is Certain

Verse 20....

For the last time in this book, Christ tells us that He is coming soon. We do not know when He is coming. We need to be vigilant. He is coming soon. We need to be aware that our lives are brief.

James 4:14 says, “What is your life? You are a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” Isaiah 40:6-8 says, “All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.”

Knowing our lives are brief, and we will die soon, we are to be vigilant and active, growing in holiness, sharing the Gospel with lost people, until God takes us out of this world or Jesus returns. Psalm 130:6 says it well: “My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.” We are to be expecting Christ in that way, with ready anticipation.

As we wait and as we work, we echo John’s agreement when Jesus says in verse 20, “I am coming quickly,” John agrees, “Amen. Come, Lord, Jesus.” He may not return this afternoon. All of us who are in Christ would be delighted, but it may be a while, so we are to work for the glory of God until then.

What will keep you faithful in Christ between now and the day you die, or the day Christ returns? Only the grace of God. He says very plainly in verse 21...

Every epistle ends this way. We are not independent of the vine, we are branches. He is the vine, and as we abide in Jesus through the ministry of the Word and the Spirit, we will stay alive in him. That is grace will keep flowing, and by that grace, we will keep walking with Him for the rest of our lives.

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.

Let me close with some applications:

For anyone here today in an unconverted state, this is an opportunity for you to come to Christ and cross over from death to life. 2 Corinthians 6:2 says, “‘In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.’ I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.” Repent of your sin and come to faith in Christ.

For us who are already in Christ, reach out with the Gospel. First, we need to give ourselves to prayer for this, to ask God to help us with our evangelistic endeavors.

Ask of God, “What do You want me to do? How can I live today? What can I do for Your glory and to serve You today? How can I feed on Your word to be strong for Your glory?”

Let’s pray...