The Final Invitation
Revelation 22:16-21
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Revelation 22:17: ***"…and let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price."***

This is our 36th and final sermon in our *Revelation Unveiled* series. I thought it would be good to go back to the very first sermon in this series to see if our purposes have been accomplished.

> *Many shy away from Revelation, imagining a book full of confusion, doom, or unsolvable puzzles. In this series, we will see Christ in His radiant glory and embrace His call to faithful living. Far from being frightening, Revelation is a book of comfort, encouragement, and assurance for every believer. However, if you are not yet saved, you should be afraid of the future! Let's worship the Lamb who is worthy and the Lion who wins as we ask God to renew our faith, increase our awe, and cause our joy to be contagious.*

It strikes me that the ultimate measure of these messages is not how many prophetical details we can explain, but whether we have a greater love for Jesus, propelling us to live on mission in our families, among our neighbors, and among the nations, as we long for His return.

Our text today is found in Revelation 22:16-21: ***"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.***

Here's our main idea: *It's time to come to Christ because the timing of His coming will be quick.*

1. Identity. In these closing verses, we see once again that Revelation is a book about the preeminence of Jesus Christ as it presents Him with numerous powerful names and titles, which highlight His identity, authority, and redemptive work. These include *The Alpha and Omega, The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Lamb, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, The Holy and True, The Ruler of God's Creation, The Word of God, The Faithful Witness,* and the *Son of Man.*

We see four more names and titles in Revelation 22:16: ***"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."*** The rich Christology found in the closing verses of Revelation is staggering.

- **Jesus.** Jesus authenticates the entire Book of Revelation when He declares, ***"I, Jesus have sent my angel to testify to you about these things…"*** This is not some "secret" book of spurious origin or human speculation. It comes directly from Jesus through His angel to John who recorded it and preserved it in the Book of Revelation. We can trust this book because of its Divine author.

  Matthew 1:21 tells us He was given the name ***"Jesus"*** because *"He will save his people from their sins."* Literally, His name means, *"The LORD saves"* or *"The LORD is salvation."* This corresponds to the Hebrew name *Yeshua* (Joshua). This book was given by Jesus especially ***"for the churches,"*** reinforcing Jesus' love for His Bride. As one pastor put it, *"The church is God's Plan A and there is no Plan B."*

- **Root of David.** The word ***"root"*** points to the preexistence of Jesus as the one who created David, called him, established his throne, and promised that his kingdom would endure forever. This is explained in Colossians 1:16-17: ***"For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth...all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."*** Jesus is the source of David.

- **Descendent of David.** Jesus is also the son of David. He is before David as God and is descended from David as man as we read in Matthew 1:1: ***"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David…"*** We could say He is the root and fruit of David.

- **Bright Morning Star.** The word ***"bright"*** means, *"dazzling, radiant, resplendent."* To call someone a star was to exalt him. The ***"morning star,"*** which is most often the planet Venus, appears just before the first light of dawn. It signals that the darkness is about to break and a new day is coming. Jesus is saying something like this: *"It's mighty dark now, but hope is coming. I'm coming to get you and when I do, we'll rule and reign together."* This title is also the fulfillment of the prophecy about the Messiah given in Numbers 24:17 that ***"a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel."*** It's no accident that according to Matthew 2:2, the wise men from the east ***"saw His star when it rose…"***

In short, this one verse tells us Jesus is Savior, the Source, the Son, and the Sovereign. Jesus is the hidden source and the visible supreme King. In these titles, we see His humble humanity along with the dazzling display of His deity. He is the promised Messiah who came in humility and the exalted King who reigns in glory.

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2. Invitation. In verse 17, we see several invitations: ***"The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price."*** This is both a prayer for Christ to come and a plea for unbelievers to come to Christ.

- The Holy Spirit says come!
- The bride, the church of Jesus, says come!
- The one who hears tells others to come!
- The one who is thirsty is invited to come!

Notice how the ***"Spirit and the Bride"*** partner together to make this evangelistic appeal. It's not one or the other, but both working together to give witness. Evangelism is the Spirit's work through the church's voice. One commentator summed it up well: *"It is the testimony of the church empowered by the Holy Spirit that constitutes the great evangelizing force of this age."*

The word ***"come"*** implies movement and could be translated as, *"come to Christ right now."* This is reinforced in 2 Corinthians 6:2: ***"Behold, now is the favorable time; behold now is the day of salvation."*** Notice how those who ***"hear"*** can't

help but invite others to come to Christ, but as Romans 10:14 says, they can't come unless they hear.

We also see the importance of being ***"thirsty."*** The only qualification to be saved is to realize you are spiritually dry and sinfully depraved. You don't have to clean yourself up to come to Christ because the only thing you can bring to Christ is your sin. You simply need to recognize that you are spiritually bankrupt, spiritually thirsty, and utterly unable to save yourself.

Jesus said it like this in John 7:37: ***"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."*** He restated this invitation in Revelation 21:6: ***"To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment."*** The thirsty can come to Christ, but they won't come until they admit their thirst. Some who are not interested in salvation sadly think that people, possessions, or pleasures satisfy them. If that describes you now, you will eventually learn that only Christ can bring lasting satisfaction.

This invitation is for everyone ***"who desires,"*** or as the KJV puts it, ***"whosoever will."*** We must balance God's sovereignty and human responsibility. Jesus declared in John 6:44: ***"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day."*** We also know that ***"whosoever will"*** can ***"take the water of life"*** and be saved.

Charles Spurgeon, who preached five sermons on Revelation 22:17 said it well: *"But mark thee, sinner, it says, 'whosoever.' What a big word that is! Whosoever! There is no standard height here. It is of any height and any size. Little sinners, big sinners…old sinners, aggravated sinners, sinners who have committed every crime in the whole catalogue – whosoever!"*

It doesn't matter what you've done or how long you've been doing it. The key is to simply ***"take the water of life without price."*** You don't have to pay for it, you don't have to perform to get it, and you don't have to do endless acts of penance to somehow deserve it because Jesus has already paid it all. This offer is freely given as a gift of grace, but you do have to come and take it. Listen to these glorious words found in Isaiah 55:1: ***"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."***

Our *Kairos* prison ministry team saw residents come to Christ this past weekend. Here's one testimony: *"I've been in the Illinois Department of Corrections for nine*

years now and had avoided attending any of these type of programs for all the wrong reasons. This has been an awesome experience. I accepted Jesus yesterday, and today I made an appointment to get baptized on December 5th."

BTW, I'll be giving an invitation and altar call at the end of the service today where you'll have the opportunity to slip out of your seat and come up front to indicate you're ready to have your spiritual thirst quenched by Christ. I've been praying that several will come to Christ this weekend!

It's time to come to Christ because the timing of His coming will be quick.

3. Inspiration. After being reminded of the identity of Christ and the invitation to come to Him, Jesus makes sure we understand that God's Word can be trusted because it is inspired. Listen to verses 18-19: ***"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book."*** We spent a lot of time on this last week, so I encourage you to jump online to read, listen, or watch the sermon.

4. Imminence. This is the belief that Christ's return could happen at any time, so we should live accordingly and expectantly. It comes from the Latin which means, "to hang over" or "to impend." This is a repeated theme in Revelation where we see some form of the word ***"come"*** used seven times in the final chapter.

Listen to verse 20: ***"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"*** The word ***"surely"*** means, *"verily and certainly."* The phrase ***"coming soon"*** means, *"promptly, swiftly, speedily, and suddenly"* and the word ***"Amen"*** means, *"truly, so be it."* Notice the phrase ***"I am coming soon"*** is bookended by ***"surely"*** and ***"Amen,"*** words which emphasize the certainty of it. This is followed by John's prayer: ***"Come, Lord Jesus!"*** One pastor proclaims that this is the earliest confession of the church and is the equivalent of the Aramaic word used in 1 Corinthians 16:22: *"Maranatha!"*

Think about how fragile our world is right now. In one week, Microsoft Outlook went down, every flight in America was grounded, bank websites went wonky, the NSA suffered a severe outage, a bomb was defused at an ethanol plant in Peoria, hackers stole customer data tied to J.P. Morgan, Visa, and Mastercard, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture experienced a cybersecurity breach that forced

numerous computers offline. In addition, the Army was planning to detonate nearly ten thousand pounds of explosives on Friday but that has now been delayed.

On top of all this instability, we see signs that the return of Christ is closer than ever before. While the headlines in our newsfeeds don't give us the precise date that Jesus is coming back (see Matthew 24:36), believers share the deep longing for a kingdom that will never falter or fail as we faithfully cry, ***"Come, Lord Jesus!"*** We know that the imminent return of Christ is closer today than it was yesterday.

I'm reminded of the song by John Peterson called, "Coming Again."

Marvelous message we bring;
Glorious carol we sing!
Wonderful word of the King:
Jesus is coming again!

Coming again, coming again!
Maybe morning, maybe noon,
Maybe evening and maybe soon!
Coming again, coming again!
Oh, what a wonderful day it will be –
Jesus is coming again!

5. Impartation. Even though the Tribulation will unleash the holy wrath of God and His righteous judgment, the book ends with the impartation of grace in verse 21: ***"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen."*** One thing I learned recently is the Old Testament ends with a declaration of ***"destruction"*** in Malachi 4:6: ***"…lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."*** The KJV says, ***"…lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."*** Because of what Jesus did for us on the cross when He became a curse for us, the New Testament does not end with a list of rules but with a benediction of grace from the Lord Jesus. This grace is imparted to ***"all,"*** which means the totality of those who trust in Christ.

Are you ready to come to Christ right now and quench your spiritual thirst?

David Jeremiah writes: *"It would be heartbreaking for someone to read this book, to get a glimpse of the future through John's visions and then leave Revelation without personally coming to the know the One who is soon to come."*

Are you ready to come and take the water of eternal life without price? It's free, but you must take it before it's gone. Listen to these words of Jesus from John 7:38: ***"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"***

If you're ready to stop drinking from the stagnant water of this world by repenting and receiving Christ, you could pray this prayer.

"Lord, I confess I'm a sinner and I fall way short of Your standards. I thirst for You and come to You as the living water and am ready to take what You offer. Thank You for paying the price for my sins and for dying on the cross as my substitute. I believe You rose again on the third day and affirm that You will return one day. I want to be ready for that, so now I repent from the way that I've been living and receive You into my life. Please forgive me for all my sins and make me into the person You want me to be. As best as I know how, I surrender all I am and all I have to You. If there's anything in my life You don't like, please get rid of it, so I can drink deeply from the rivers of living water. In Jesus' name. Amen."