

Revelation 22 – Even So, Come, Lord Jesus

Well, the Lord willing, the plan is to finish our study of this amazing book of the Bible that's given the title "**The Revelation of Jesus Christ**". And for those of you who have been with us from the very beginning of this study through the book of **Revelation** I just want to say – Well done! It's amazing! Chapters **6-19** are a long haul. And you really dug in. And you were students of the Word of God. If this is your first time or you've just been here recently that's awesome as well because the last chapter of the last book of the Bible is actually not the end; it's the beginning. In chapter **21** we're given our first glimpse of the new Jerusalem. And the chapter closed with the words,

"²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life."

So we know who is going to be there.

And in the **1st 5** verses of chapter **22** we move inside of this city.

And we're going to discover that this city is like a beautiful garden.

And as we see this we need to understand how amazing and divinely inspired the Bible is.

And this is what I was referencing earlier about the series [Route 66](#).

It's a great lead into that series that we're going to start next.

The Bible is not one book. It's a library.

It's a collection of 66 divinely-inspired books – 66 books, penned by 40 authors, over about 1,500 years.

But it possesses a unity in theme, continuity and trajectory that can only be explained by divine authorship.

It's not one book. It's this library. It's this collection.

And I want to encourage you – it's God's story cover to cover.

And because it's God's story it's unlike any human story.

Human stories – beginning, middle, end – right?

God's story has a beginning, a middle, and a beginning.

In this last chapter of this last book of the Bible we're shown this garden city

And we find a garden in the very first book of the Bible, **Genesis**, the book of beginnings.

It was a garden that God made and prepared for man. Then he created man, placed him in it.

And man walked in perfect fellowship with God. It was in that same garden that man fell.

It was also in a garden that Jesus prayed concerning his sacrificial death on the cross, the cup that he would drink, that he would bear and endure the wrath of God, the indignation of God against sin. And he prayed there in a garden just hours before being crucified.

It was also in a garden near to the place where Jesus was crucified that Jesus rose from the grave, conquering death and guaranteeing the eternal life that we have pictured for us here in chapter **22**.

It was also in the original garden, after man had bought into the lie of lies – and remember the lie of lies that was presented, that he was tempted with, is that you could have life without God – it was in that garden that God pronounced judgment upon Satan; and God promised that a Redeemer would one day come who would crush the serpent's head.

So the Bible moves –

from a garden – paradise lost – in **Genesis**,

to a city garden – paradise restored – in **Revelation**.

And that's why I'm so excited to walk through the 66 books of the Bible with you so that we see God's story unfold for us. But let's stop here and pray before we go any further.

Father, first of all we want to say thank you that you're the God who speaks. Thank you that you didn't leave us wondering what forever is or what it's all about. Thank you that you haven't left us wondering why are we even existing. But you've spoken to us from Genesis to Revelation. And, Lord, I pray that as we study the last chapter of the book of Revelation that you would press on us something about heaven that would leave us eternally changed, that we would have a greater desire for what's ahead of us. God, keep our hearts from being so distracted or indifferent that we would leave here with no more excitement about heaven than when we walked. Lord, we want to know you more; and we want to know more than ever where we're headed. Change us, Lord. And, Lord, if there are any who are not absolutely assured that the place described in this chapter is where they're headed for eternity, Lord, together we pray that you would draw them to yourself. And, Lord, for all of that, Holy Spirit, I pray please anoint me to teach your Word with clarity. I pray that your Word would go forth in the demonstration of your power so that our hearts would be changed, the name of Jesus would be made great in our hearts, that we would have a desire for the name of Jesus to be made known and be made great in all the world through the making of disciples. And we ask all of this in the wonderful name of Jesus, amen.

Well, at the close of the book of **Revelation** we're ushered into the eternal dimension. And John says this –

“¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city;”

Would you write in the margin of your Bible **John 7:37, 38**? The John who is receiving this revelation from God on the Isle of Patmos is the John who authored his account of the life of Jesus. **John 7:37, 38** is where we have the account of Jesus in Jerusalem. And he's standing on the Temple Mount **“on the last day, the great day”** of the Feast of Tabernacles. The Temple Mount would have been inundated with people. And in the middle of that crowd -

“³⁷ ... Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”

In a voice that would have stopped everyone dead in their tracks there on that Temple Mount Jesus addressed the deep thirst of man for God. He's saying, *“Way down deep in your spirit is this thirsting for God. I'm the answer to that thirst. Come to me and drink.”* And in that moment Jesus was declaring that he is the answer to the thirst for God that exists in every man and woman. And if you don't know Jesus you need to know that the thirst in your heart can only be satisfied from Jesus. He alone is the answer to the longing of our souls. As John is being shown what's within the new Jerusalem he's shown this river. And it flows – this is very important – from the throne of the Lamb. It's flowing from the very one who said in **John 7, “If any man thirsts, let him come to me.”**

Jesus, the Lamb of God, has settled the issue of sin by his sacrificial death on the cross.

Jesus, the Lamb of God, has conquered the grave.

He's judged the world during the seven years of the great tribulation.

He's returned to the earth and ruled the world in righteousness from the throne of David in Jerusalem for 1,000 years.

He has cast Satan into the lake of fire, along with all who joined Satan in his rebellion against God.

He's now created a new heaven and a new earth and a new Jerusalem.

And there in the new Jerusalem he is seated on his throne.

And from his throne flows the river of the water of life.

Pure life flowing from the one who is life

And it flows through every street of the city. Now try to picture this.

This crystal clear river of life is flowing down the middle of every street in the city.

The very life of God is with us, the redeemed, in eternity in this new Jerusalem.

Pure life flowing from the one who is life

John **“also”** tells us in verse **2** that – **“on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”**

Notice it's a singular tree, this one tree, the tree of life. And wherever the river is this tree is growing along it. And it's going to bring forth a different kind of fruit each month. Yes we will eat forever. I'm very happy about that.

It says the leaves will be for healing. Now some will say, *"Well, wait a minute. Just back in chapter 21:4 God said there would be no more sickness, no more death, no more pain, no more suffering. So this must be a contradiction – leaves for healing – healing what if there is no more suffering, no more death, no more sickness?"*

Whenever we see an apparent contradiction – and I want to underscore the word apparent – Whenever we see an apparent contradiction in the Bible it's generally resolved within the original languages. And that's why I want to encourage you to have a library for the study of the Scriptures.

You should have books that will help you. One very important book is a word study book.

And there are so many of them, so many good ones available to you.

You can get them in print form or you can get them in electronic medium.

It's so important that you have one of those.

Guys that have spent their lives studying the original languages of the Scripture have tools for us to know what these words are so that when we come across a word, and we think, *'Does that mean this?'* And you can go look it up, and realize, *'Well, actually it's rooted in this word that gives a little more understanding to what this really means.'*

The word that John uses here – we actually get our English word 'therapeutic' from it.

And it doesn't mean that there is going to be sick people in Heaven and they need to use these leaves to be healed.

The word that is used literally means – 'health giving'.

Think about it – From the fall of man in **Genesis 3** the world has been on giant carcinogen. Would you agree? It's just one giant sickening place. And it's only a matter of time. Things are so bad along the line because of the fall. Our son Nathan had a friend in grade school who was getting sick, deathly sick. The doctors didn't know what it was. And it turns out he had celiac disease. And gluten was killing him. It didn't used to kill people. Now it's killing people.

Well, It's because the world is broken;
And it's getting more broken all the time.

The world that we live in is just a giant carcinogen. By contrast, nothing in the new earth takes away from life and health. The leaves of the tree of life have nothing of the curse in it. Anything that's in this city, anything that's in the new heaven and the new earth and the new Jerusalem has nothing that detracts from life, that spoils life, that ruins life. It's all therapeutic. That's the point of this tree and its leaves.

The big point towards which the total story of the Bible has been moving towards is seen here for us.

Ever since **Genesis 3** the trajectory of the Scriptures is this –

Redeemed Rescued Rebels – that would be you if you are a Christian.

And if you're not a Christian you need to be redeemed and rescued from your rebellion.

Redeemed Rescued Rebels will forever enjoy all that the river of life and the tree of life provide.

It's been said that the most important moments in the history of the earth have revolved around three trees.

1. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil,
2. The Tree of Life,
3. And the Tree on Calvary, the cross of Jesus

We remember that in the beginning when God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden that there was all manner of trees in the garden. Would you write in the margin of your Bible there in **Revelation 22** – write **Genesis 2:16, 17**.

And this is amazing.

We're in the last few pages of the Bible.

And we're going to turn back to the first few pages of the Bible.

And they are connected talking about the same subject – far right to far left.

**“¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,
¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat,
for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.””**

And we know the story. Given all of this freedom, man was drawn to the one tree and one fruit that was forbidden. And it's radical to think about.

Why in the world would Adam have eaten of the tree of death before he ate from the tree of life?

I believe that the answer lies in the account of the temptation of Eve.

We're told that fruit that was forbidden was very appealing.

And so man looked at the other trees, looked at the fruit of the forbidden tree, and he chose the tree of death.

Now there are those who say, *“Well, that is why I really can't believe the Bible. Anybody with any sense, if they had a choice would choose the tree of life instead of the tree of death.”* And I can agree with that in the natural. It would seem that anyone with common sense would choose the tree of life. But do you realize that today men and women are faced with the exact same choices as Adam and Eve –

Because God has set before us –
death and life,
life and death.

Deuteronomy 30: “¹⁵ See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, ²⁰ loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life...”

So every day we're faced with the same choice as Adam and Eve. But faced with the same choice as Adam and Eve people by the millions are still making the same decision that Adam and Eve made. And the reason they make the same choice is because they still find the tree of death more appealing than the tree of life.

You see, the cross is the only way to the tree of life. And the cross does not appeal to our flesh.

What is attractive about the cross? It means death. It's shameful. It's horrific.

And that's why in many churches the cross is downplayed because they know that the cross is not an easy sell.

It's repugnant to the natural man. But it's the only place where man can find life.

On the other hand, what looks like life to the natural man only leads to death.

**“There is a way that seems right to a man; but the end of it is death.”
“the pleasures of sin are for a season”**

It looks great on the front end. But it's always bad on the back end. It's death.

But the thing that looks like death – and in reality there is a death in the cross for everyone –

It's the cross that is the only way to life.

**Revelation 2: “⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”**

**Revelation 22: “¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes,
so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.”**

Here's what is so awesome –

From the fall of man forward God has been at work in human history to redeem and return man to the tree of life.

The Bible – from **Genesis** through **Revelation** – has been called 'The Romance of Redemption'.

It's the story of God loving us, sending His Son to hang on a tree of death so that we might have access to, that we might have the right to the tree of life.

I remember a few years back we were in Brazil in the city of Curitiba. And we were doing an open-air thing. And I was speaking. And there were people. And they were so respectful because they have a very strong Catholic background. And so if anybody is talking about God by and large people will stop just out of respect. And by way of a translator I said, “*You might be wondering, ‘What is it that moves somebody to get on a plane and fly 6-7,000 miles, to stand in front of people to talk about God.’*”

This is what moves you 6-7,000 miles to go talk about God –
God loving man,
sending his Son to hang on a tree of death,
so that we might have access to the tree of life.

Where wouldn't we go for him?
Why wouldn't we want to tell people what God has done in letting his Son hang on a tree of death –
so they could have access, they could have the right to the tree of life.

I pray that God will have used our study in the book of **Revelation**;
I pray that God is going to use our study in the book of **Nehemiah**;
I pray that as we move through the Bible –

He is going to stir our hearts to say that God's story is so fantastic, so amazing, so wonderful, so life-changing –
What wouldn't we do for him?

“³ No longer will there be anything accursed,”

When Adam and Eve ate of the tree of death it resulted in a curse – a curse –
upon man,
upon woman,
upon the earth itself.

But there will be no more curse in the new Jerusalem, no more sorrow, no more pain, no more thorns on the ground. Thorns are symbolic of the curse because they were non-existent before man sinned. Christian, you are headed for a place where there will be no more thorns – because Jesus was willing to be crowned with thorns, because Jesus was willing to have thorns, the very mark of the curse in this planet crushed into his skull. because Jesus was willing to be bloodied by the very thing that represents the curse so that we could be found in the new Jerusalem where there is no curse.

Jesus is awesome. There's that old hymn – **“My Jesus I love Thee.”** I love that verse in it –

*“I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, tis now.”*

No longer will there be anything accursed.

“but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.”

The story of God runs out to this very thing in this very place – Jesus exalted and enjoyed forever by the redeemed. That's the end. That's the whole point. That's the point of evangelism. Seeing somebody come to Jesus isn't just so they can have a better life here, and join church, and be a part of a community of people who desire to acknowledge God and believe God and try to live for God. The point of evangelism is to see men and women reconciled to God, and that they will one day stand in a new heaven, in a new earth, in the presence of God redeemed, worshipping their redeemer, exalting him and enjoying him forever. Do you think that might be why evangelistic efforts are kind of weak, because we really don't understand the real point?

Men and women from every language, every ethnic group, redeemed and worshipping their redeemer –

We need to live for that day. That should be what gets us out of bed;
Because that's what moves the Holy Spirit.

When we were doing our [series on the Holy Spirit](#) we saw that the Holy Spirit is passionate to see men and women know Jesus. He's passionate to have men and women trusting Jesus, be saved and washed by the blood of Jesus, so that they will stand in his presence exalting him forever.

Now this word translated “**worship**” –

Some of your translations might read – “serve”. And that's a great translation of this word;
Because the word “worship” is not referring merely to worship in song or moments devoted to adoration.
Though that will certainly be happening in Heaven. We've seen that scene in Heaven in the book of **Revelation**.
But this word means to worship by serving.
In the margin of your Bible write **Romans 12:1**, because this same word is used there.

Romans 12: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”

There's that same word translated “**worship**” in **Revelation 22** – worshipping God with service by way of our service.

This dispels any thoughts of Heaven being a place of eternal boredom. Have you ever seen how many times Heaven is depicted as a place where guys are just laying around on clouds? They kind of look more like babies than men. They have diapers with angel's wings. And they're holding little harps. That is not Heaven. There will be no boredom in Heaven. We will not be doing nothing.

It's not like a forever vacation. I like Hawaii. I like Hawaii a lot – for about seven or eight days; because then I start going nuts. The very air in Hawaii is therapeutic. If you've ever been there, the air hits you & you're thinking, 'Wow! This is therapeutic.' But as therapeutic as it is there, after awhile I just get so antsy. I get so bored. Heaven is not going to be like Hawaii, like after eight days into eternity you're thinking, 'Are we done?'

Let me ask you this –

Is there something that you love to do, and it's such a pleasure for you to do that you would never call it work?

I have some very good friends who love to surf. And I'm telling you these guys are desperate every day of their lives to get in salt water. And when some of these guys were in high school they would get up in the dark hours of the morning no matter how cold it was just to get in a session before having to go to school. No one made them get out of bed that early. Nobody said, “*You have to go surfing or else...*” They just wanted to get up and surf because they loved to surf. And for guys like them they wouldn't know what to do with themselves if somebody came up to them, and said, “*I want to pay you to train you to be a great surfer. And every day you're going to have to come to the beach, train, and then surf every day, all day. And then I'm going to give you free surfboards and free beachwear. And then I'm going to pay you to travel around the world and surf the greatest breaks in the world. And you'll get more money and endorsements.*” Not one of them are going to think, “*Oh work*”. It's not work. It's their joy.

I think of our oldest son. It's his birthday today. He's thirty-years old today. I love that guy. He loves to play the guitar. He loves to make music. He gets paid now to play the guitar. And he gets free guitars because he's good at playing the guitar. And he plays it in front of a lot of people. And people are saying, “*Play our guitar in front of those people. We'll give it to you.*” He gets paid to travel to the most amazing places in the world. And he's paid to play music with guys that he loves to play music with. His job is a joy.

Don't think of the kind of job that you do because you have to do it;
And you think that in heaven you'll have a job; and you hope it's one you like.

Even on this side of Heaven because of sin –
Even those kinds of jobs can fall short of and can miss the mark of being worship.

On this side of Heaven we can do those things that we love to do –
But we can do them from a wrong motive;
We can do them for selfish gain, for self-glory.

We can find ourselves complaining even in the thing that we love to do.
We can get tired in doing it – literally physically, emotionally fatigued in doing what we love to do.
And then there are going to be days when we do what we love to do worse than we like to do it.
We would love to have done that better.

But not in Heaven –

There will be no wrong motive in Heaven – right?
There is nothing there that defiles.
There will be no imperfection in our service.
We will have glorified bodies.
We will have hearts and minds so ready to grab anything God throws our way that we will do it perfectly.
And there will be no fatigue in it.
And one reason there will be no fatigue is God is going to give us bodies that will never get tired, never wear out. But I believe that there will be no fatigue not only because of our new glorified bodies, but because of what we read next.

“4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.”

This is the essence of Heaven.

In the margin of your Bible there next to verse 4 would you write **John 17:24?** – From **New King James Version** –

**“24 Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am,
that they may behold My glory...”**

A number of years ago a friend, a really, really dear friend, he is in Heaven now; he was probably the most talented musician I've ever met, ever heard, a guy named Roby Duke – and he wrote this song, **“I Shall See God”**. And the first time I ever heard it, he gave me his CD right after it came out. And I was driving into the parking lot at the Pacific Amphitheatre for Easter Sunrise Service. And I thought, *‘I'm going to pop Roby's disk in here and have a listen.’* And this song played. And I could barely get out of the car. And so what I want us to do now is I want to play this song. It's about 4 minutes+. And I want you to think about **“They will see his face”**. He is the essence of Heaven – Jesus.

Charles Spurgeon said, *“Oh to think of Heaven without Christ – It is the same thing as thinking of Hell. Heaven without Christ – It is day without the sun, existing without life, feasting without food, seeing without light. It involves a contradiction in terms. Heaven without Christ – absurd. It is the sea without water, the earth without its fields, the heavens without their stars. There cannot be a Heaven without Christ. He is the sum total of bliss, the fountain from which Heaven flows, the element of which Heaven is composed. Christ is Heaven. And Heaven is Christ.”*

A whole lot of time in my life – that's lost on me.
Sometimes church obscures Heaven. Isn't that crazy?
Sometimes what I do for the Lord obscures Jesus. Isn't that absurd?

The whole of our Christian life looks forward to, is moving towards the moment when we shall see the face of God, to finally behold, as Roby said, **“the beginning”**, **“perfect peace”**, **“perfect life”**, to behold that which fallen man could never behold.

We will one day see what at this time we've only seen by faith.
In that day faith will become sight.

1 Corinthians 13: “¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.

Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.”

1 Peter 1: “⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him.

And though you do not now see him,

you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.”

That is on this side of eternity where –
we just see in a mirror dimly;
we know in part;
we love him but we haven't seen him.

When we see his face we are going to know a joy so great that we will need glorified bodies to contain the experience.

And here's the challenge to me. I believe it's a challenge to each one of us.

The life lived close to God here and now is like the rough draft of Heaven.

And those who drink most deeply of Heaven here and now are the ones who most long for that day.

For a lot of Christians –

And I throw myself in that lot.

Sometimes we're just moving targets, right?

If you're plotting us on a graph we can be in different places.

But for a lot of Christians Heaven is a place where they're going to gaze at some of the various works of God in distant parts of the new heavens, and look at the various details of the new Jerusalem. And in their estimation that will be the source of their eternal happiness. And I think that's why there are a lot of Christians that are not overwhelmingly happy about the prospect of Heaven. I don't want to say this in a way that's trivial, because death is not trivial. But barring the rapture of the Church how else are we going to get to Heaven.

Paul didn't say in his writings that heaven is a place that's pretty awesome; it has amazing things.

Paul the apostle saw heaven as the place where Jesus is.

Though his knowledge of God was only in part – He's the one that penned that passage in **1 Corinthians 13:12** –

Though his knowledge of God was only in part – It was still so real that he could say to the **Philippians in 1:22** that–

He wanted to be with Christ which is far better than being here. That wasn't escapism. He was just saying,

“I could be here for you and minister to you. And that would be better for you. But if I could, I'd rather be with Christ.”

Let me try to illustrate. I love my wife a whole lot! She's in Brooklyn again with some little guy named Ever. And we FaceTime(d) today for a little bit this morning. And he's amazing. And she's amazing. And I'm just sitting there; and I said, *“Don't you wish we could smoosh on FaceTime? I just want to kiss you. I love you”* She's 3,000 miles away. And I've been away from her far more than those times she's been away from me. And when I'm away from her it's great to call her. It's great to get emails. It's great to get txt messages with photos attached. But to be with her is far better. And there are times when I'm away on ministry when there comes a point when my homing device turns on. And usually it's when I know that we've dropped the payload that we were there to do – that's why we were there – we've accomplished it. And usually when it comes to being in England and ministering there I just know ministry is done. I'm almost over. And I'm in it. I'm in that moment. And we're having our communications by txt and email and some FaceTime now. But usually I just know that when we're done Pastor Jim King and I are going to spend a couple of days together, drive through the Yorkshire Dales, have some great tea and some nice meals together. But usually about the time I'm done he'll look at me, and say, *“You're homing device is on, right?”* And I say, *“Yeah, Jim, I love you brother, but yeah.”* And I'll tell you, I may have been away from home for ten days or so on those trips – a ten hour flight back after ten days away seems like forever. And in those moments I wish it could be like Star Trek – that beam me home thing – just walk on the plane and walk out the other side of the door, and you're back home. And really Valerie is the most amazing homemaker. I know a lot of you, the first time you walked in here into our building, you said, *“Whoa, this is so lovely. I love how this building just wraps its arms around me.”* That's Valerie. That's her touch. I love our home. I love walking into my home every day the way she has it. It's so warm. It's so inviting.

But when I'm away, and really want to go home –
I'm not thinking about getting back to my own bed;
I'm not thinking about my place on the couch;
I'm not thinking about my own refrigerator and her cooking;
I'm not thinking about getting to where she lives.
My great desire is to be with her, to see her face.

Infinitely more so - It should be like that for us concerning Jesus.

Paul never said that he would rather be in Heaven because that's far better.
He said, "*I'd rather be with Jesus. That's far better.*"

Getting to Heaven should be our consuming desire, not simply because Heaven is glorious.
It should be our consuming desire because Heaven is where Jesus is – finishing our race.
Getting to Heaven should be our consuming desire because that's when we're going to see his face.

If Jesus isn't that wonderful to us – exactly what is it that we're inviting people to in what we call evangelism?

Are we pitching a Jesus to the world who will make life better for them here in this world?
Are we pitching church?
Are we pitching sub-culture?
What's the point of our evangelism if Jesus isn't that wonderful to us?

If Jesus isn't that wonderful to us – what exactly are we up to when we come to church to gather?

Why are we really here? In a way these gatherings are like dress rehearsals for that moment.
As we worship the Lord together in song, as we open His Word we're seeking the face of Jesus.
With the eye of faith we want to reach out and touch him.
The Bible tells us right here that we're going to see his face.

Think about it –

No more sin to dim our view of him.
No more unbelief to blind the eyes of faith.

We sing that song –
Your presence is all I need. It's all I want. It's all I seek.
Without it there is no meaning.
Your presence is the air I breathe, the song I sing, and the love I need.
And without it I'm not living.

Before meeting Jesus surely our lives had no meaning. And then we meet Jesus; and with Jesus in our lives suddenly we have meaning, suddenly we are literally alive, raised from being dead in our trespasses and sins. But aren't there times in all of our lives when the sense of his presence is not quite like it has been on other times? Sure. Sometimes it's like on a cloudy day – the sun's not gone, right?

I remember my friend Malcolm Wild the first time his mom ever got on a plane and flew to visit Malcolm in California. And she'd never been on a plane. And she was so shocked that when she got above the clouds – which there are a lot of clouds in England – that the sun was there. She literally said, "Malcy, when we got above the clouds the sun was there." He's thinking, 'Well, mom, where do you think it's always been? Just because there's clouds doesn't mean the sun is gone.' But she had never flown above the clouds to know it.

And sometimes there are things that cloud his presence in our lives – things like suffering.
What do we do in those moments?
Where do we turn in those moments?
In our relationship with Jesus on this side of forever – it's so intimate; it's so precious and so fulfilling.
But it's not like what it's going to be.

Let me ask you –

Is your experience, your relationship with Jesus so intimate and precious and fulfilling here,
that you can't wait to be with Jesus because you know it's far better?
Or is here just good enough – If we could just keep doing here that would be great?

Who will ultimately see his face?

Well, Jesus said in **Matthew 5: “⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they (and they alone) shall see God.”**

Now there is not one redeemed heart pure enough to see face to face.

There are those who imagine themselves pure enough of heart to see his face, apart from the blood of Jesus.
But that's because they have no idea how pure Jesus is.

This passage in the book of **Revelation** gives such power and weight to the words of God spoken by Isaiah.

**Isaiah 1: “¹⁸ Come now let us reason together, says the Lord:
though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.”**

We can never stand before Jesus –
in the whitewash of our own self-righteousness,
in the whitewash of being religious.

That will never gain you a glimpse of this sight that John is writing about.
To see his face you need a pure heart.
And God has graciously offered to make us pure.

And, again, that brings us back to the cross.
**“The blood of Jesus, God's Son, cleanses a man of all sin.”
“Jesus loved us and washed us from our sins with his blood.”**

And that's why Jesus said, **“I am the way, and no one comes to the Father but by me.”**
Because only Jesus can take care of the thing that keeps man locked out of the presence of God – sin.

And that's why –
Jesus is the centerpiece, the focal point of Heaven,
Jesus is wonderful,
Jesus is worthy –
Because He is the one who took our sin away.

Is Jesus your treasure?
Matthew 6:2 – Jesus said, **“For where your treasure is there will your heart be also.”**

“⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light,

Again, that song – *Your presence is all I need.*

Try to get your head and your heart around living in the light of God's majestic glorious presence –
fully,
perfectly,
without any interruption,
with nothing to cloud it, nothing to take away from it – forever.

“and they will reign forever and ever.”

Now how long is forever?

Usually when we think of forever we start putting numbers together, right? What's the biggest number? Well, long before the internet scientists spoke of a number called 'googol'. It's the number 1 followed by 100 zeroes (1.0×10^{100}). It's a big number. It's really inconceivably large. But then there's a number called a googolplex. And this is a googol raised to the googoleth power. And it's said that this number is so great that if you wrote it out there would not be enough space on earth to contain the pages. But even a googolplex is finite. There is an end.

Imagine for a moment that there is a little bird that its task is to remove planets. And its job is – It's going to come to planet Earth and remove one speck of dust at a time until planet Earth is gone. And it's going to take that speck, one speck of dust at a time, and go 100,000 light years away, and deposit it there. That means this little bird is going to have to fly really fast, like 11 million miles per hour. Travelling at the speed of 11 million miles per hour it will take this bird 100,000 years to make the drop off and 100,000 years to come back for its second grain of planet earth if it's going to the other end of the Milky Way, our galaxy. And when that bird has finally deposited the last grain of planet earth on the other side of the Milky Way galaxy eternity will not be one second shorter.

Eternity will be endless timeless joy in the presence of the Lord.

Don't miss this –

The fullness and the duration of our joy will be matched by a fullness and duration of torment for the lost.

And even as the believer is going to receive a new body that's for eternity, never grow old, never get sick, with the capacity to actually enjoy life in the presence of the majestic glory of God;

The unbeliever will also have a body fit for eternity, an eternity of punishment, unquenchable fire, dying, yet never dead, outer darkness, wailing, gnashing of teeth.

Spurgeon said – *“The Hell of Hells will be the thought that it is forever. You are damned forever – a place filled with howlings that are to be perpetual with flames that are unquenchable. It knows pains that are unmitigated.”*

“⁶ And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”

Wiersbe said this – *“Heaven is more than a destination. It's a motivation.”*

Knowing that we're destined for this heavenly city ought to make a difference in our lives right here and right now. The vision of the heavenly city motivated the Old Testament patriarchs as they walked with God and served God. In the margin of your Bible write **Hebrews 11:10**.

“¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. ¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.”

The assurance of Heaven should motivate us.

But it should never ever lead us to be complacent or careless.

It should cause us to be more zealous as we live for Jesus right here and right now – to spend and be spent.

⁷ “And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

“⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, ⁹ but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.” ¹⁰ And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.””

Now there was another time in the Bible where God told Daniel, “*Seal up what I showed you.*” It was a prophetic book. It was looking out into the future.

Daniel 8: “²⁶ ...seal up the vision, for it refers to many days from now.”

But check it out –

At the end of the 1st century God told John to not seal it.

He said it’s time to open and study prophecy.

For these things are going to happen quickly once they begin to be fulfilled.

“¹¹ **Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy,
and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.**”

Now does this passage suggest that God does not want people to repent and change their ways? No! Because that would be contrary to the message of the book of Revelation, contrary to the gospel itself.

The angel’s words need to be understood in light of –

his repeated statement, “**Behold, I come quickly**”,

as well as his statement there in verse 10, “**for the time is at hand**”.

It means that the coming of Jesus is going to occur so quickly that people will not have time to change who they are. There will be no time to repent.

If you’re a believer when Jesus comes, you’re good.

If you’re not, you’re not good.

Revelation 22:11 warns us that –

decisions determine character;

and character is going to determine destiny.

Have you made a decision for Jesus?

Don’t think, ‘*Well, I’ll just wait. I’ll just wait.*’

Because there is coming a time when Jesus is going to come;

And there will be no time to change, no time to believe then.

“¹² **Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.**

¹³ **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.**”

“¹⁴ **Blessed are those who wash their robes,**

so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.

¹⁵ **Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters,
and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.**”

“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.”

“¹⁷ **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.

²⁰ **He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!**

²¹ **The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.**”

Three times in this closing chapter the Lord declares, “*I come quickly.*”

Now some people say, “*Well, Richard, he has delayed his return for nearly 2,000 years.*” Yes he has.

But Peter tells us why –

2 Peter 3: “⁹ **The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you,
not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.**”

How many of you have met Jesus in the last five years? How many in the last 10 years? Last 20?
Aren't you glad that Jesus didn't come right after he said I'm coming quickly to John at the end of the 1st century?
In the meantime the Spirit of God through the Church, through the Bride of Christ, calls for Jesus to come.
It's okay to wake up in the morning, and say, "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*"
Don't you long for a new earth? I do. And even as we ask Jesus to come;
We should be inviting as many as we can to trust and come to Jesus, so that one day they'll drink the water of life.

The expectancy of the return of Jesus –
provokes ministry,
provokes evangelism,
provokes purity of heart.

A true understanding of Bible prophecy should –
motivate us to obey God's Word,
motivate us to share God's Word,
motivate us to extend God's invitation to a lost world.

And if our study in the book of Revelation has really been directed by the Holy Spirit;
If our hearts have been open to the Holy Spirit;
Then we will join John in the Bible's very last prayer, "**Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**"

*Lord, thank you for lettings us walk through this incredible book of the Bible together.
And, Lord, I pray that however I stumbled and bumbled, however I failed to articulate the truth that's here;
Lord, I just trust that by your Spirit the very words that you have penned in the pages of the book of Revelation are
so powerful and so living, that despite me you're working.*