

# Come, Lord Jesus!

## Revelation 22

How do you feel when someone you love leaves?

Robin traveled to see her sister this week to celebrate her retirement from teaching.

I can tell you how I felt.

I wanted her to enjoy herself. But I wanted to see her return.

And it wasn't simply for all the things that she does to care for me and Ginny.

I really just wanted to be with her again, to enjoy her company.

But this week does not even come close to the way I felt before we were married. Robin and I had a long distance relationship. We met in Yellowstone National Park. She was going to school at ECU and I was studying at Wright State University. So, we did not get to see each other all that much during our 2 ½ years of dating. But the summer before we got married she came to Dayton, OH and we saw each other every day in normal life. It was great. But when the summer ended, she went back to live with her parents to prepare the wedding for that final three months. So we were apart. And I was miserable. And I was giddy. And I was everything in between.

I wanted to be with Robin. And I wanted to say my vows to her. Neither of us could wait for that day to come.

This is the reaction that God has for you. He is so looking forward to His wedding day. He is yearning to be with His bride. For the last 2,000 years, He has been getting ready for His wedding day. He has been preparing a home for us.

What is your response to Jesus' words, "I am coming soon."?

I can tell you the response Jesus wants you to have: Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

In chapter 21, we were given a beautiful picture of the Church, the New Jerusalem, dwelling in the New Heavens and the New Earth as a Bride to King Jesus.

Technically, this picture continues until v. 5 of chapter 22.

I was glad to wait until today to explore these final verses because it will help us to link the picture of "happily ever after" with what should be our response to this picture:

Come, Lord Jesus!

Understanding the nuances of the cry, "Come, Lord Jesus!" is the focus of this sermon.

But before we get into the nuances, we should acknowledge the bold strokes.

When Jesus returns, all who believe in Him will enjoy "happily ever after."

Therefore, all who believe in Jesus should cry out to Him, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Read Revelation 22:1-2.

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;  
also,  
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.

Here we see a river and a tree.  
Both existed in the Garden of Eden.

**Genesis 2:10** <sup>10</sup> A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.

The river is the source of life for the Garden.

In the fall, man was kicked out of the Garden. But through the Covenant of Grace, God gives hope to His people of a new river to give them life, and to make them glad.

The promise of a life-giving river flows through the pages of Scripture.

**Psalms 46:4-5** <sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. <sup>5</sup> God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.

The most complete picture of what is being fulfilled here in Revelation comes from the book of Ezekiel.

**Ezekiel 47:1-12** Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. <sup>2</sup> Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and behold, the water was trickling out on the south side. <sup>3</sup> Going on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water, and it was ankle-deep. <sup>4</sup> Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was waist-deep. <sup>5</sup> Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen. It was deep enough to swim in, a river that

could not be passed through. <sup>6</sup> And he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he led me back to the bank of the river. <sup>7</sup> As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. <sup>8</sup> And he said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. <sup>9</sup> And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. <sup>10</sup> Fishermen will stand beside the sea. From Engedi to Engelaim it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. <sup>11</sup> But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. <sup>12</sup> And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing."

In Ezekiel, the source of the river is the threshold of the Temple.  
But in Revelation, there is no Temple.  
So, the source of the river is the throne of God and of the Lamb.  
But it is the same river.

This source of this river is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

**John 7:38** <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

**John 4:10** <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

**John 4:13-14** <sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

The River is a picture of the Holy Spirit in His life-giving work.

**John 6:63** <sup>63</sup> It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no avail. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

**Romans 8:11** <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

**Galatians 3:2** <sup>2</sup> Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?

There is no other fountain of life but the cross of Jesus Christ.  
And the fruit of the cross is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit unto all who believe.

The river runs down the middle of the street. Again, the symbolism is what is important.  
All activity within the city is grounded in the Spirit which is grounded in the Gospel.

There is no other fountain of life.

12 kinds of fruit helps us to see the perfection of the fruit.  
And notice that all the trees are accessible.  
There is no forbidden tree having forbidden fruit.

Remember Satan's lie that God was holding back from giving everything to Adam and Eve?

We now see the greatness of that lie.  
God holds nothing back from His people. He gives to them all the fullness of life.

And we receive that fruit without making an idol of the fruit.

The leaves are for the healing of the nations. Once we are in glory, we will no longer need healing. But the leaves portray the healing nature of the New Heavens and New Earth. We all have wounds, physical, mental, and spiritual, that are not fully healed until we arrive at that glorious land. The picture is that there is no wound, no matter how terrible, that will not be fully healed there.

It does not matter if the wounds are self-inflicted – due to your own sin.  
Or if they are inflicted by others.  
True healing takes place in that Land.

Read Revelation 22:3-5.

3       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.  
4       They will see his face,  
          and  
          his name will be on their foreheads.  
5       And  
          night will be no more.  
          They will need no light of lamp or sun,

for the Lord God will be their light,  
and  
they will reign forever and ever.

The beauty of our life in the New Heavens and New earth is that we will be more enamored with Jesus than with the glories of the creation.

The glory of the world will no longer distract us from worshipping our Lord. The irony is that the world will be more glorious than we have ever seen. But it will not be able to rip our hearts away from enjoying the glory of Christ.

We will live every moment of every day experiencing the fullness of the presence of God.

The name of Jesus will be on our foreheads. That means three things. First, it means that we fully and completely belong to Him.

Secondly, it means that we will be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

And thirdly, it means that we will co-reign with Him. We were designed to reign over creation. We failed. But Jesus has won the victory, and we will indeed reign with Him over the New Creation.

All effects of the curse will vanish.

I am not sure exactly how deeply the curse has affected the world in which we live.

One thing I do know is that almost everything about this world is connected to death. Our cells are continually dying and being remade.

Plants do not even grow without a seed going into the ground and experiencing some sort of death.

I do not know how deeply our world depends upon death. Biologists might be able to give us a better idea. But I know enough to be baffled at the thought of a world in which death does not exist.

The tree of life, or trees of life, will never be uprooted by a storm and cause the power lines to be broken. I am not really sure what ants and carpenter bees and termites will do in the that Land. They will finally be altered, and we will know their true purpose. Mosquitos won't carry disease.

The life represented this tree is unending. It does not die, ever.

Every time I try to imagine such a world, my brain short circuits. All I know is that it will amaze us.

And yet, as amazing as it is, we will still be more enamored with Jesus Christ. We will worship Him.

Read Revelation 22:6-7.

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

For the second time, John must be told that what he is seeing and hearing is true and trustworthy. It is not a fairytale. It is prophetic truth. God has spoken it and God never lies.

Jesus graciously sent the message of Revelation to encourage you to stay in the fight. He wants you to "keep" the words of the prophecy of this book.

That means that He wants you to embrace them and to store them up into your heart of hearts. In other words, He wants you to keep believing that they are truth.

Very simply, keep holding onto Jesus' promise that He is coming soon.

Jesus knows how very difficult it is for you to keep believing. This is why He has given us the book of Revelation. He wants you to have enough of a glimpse of the glory to come, to keep you pressing on in your Christian faith.

Read Revelation 22:8-9.

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."

I love the realism of these verses.

We are immediately jerked back into the reality that we are not yet living in glory. If we were, then John would not have been tempted to bow down to an angel. The fact is, until we see Jesus Christ face to face, we will continue to struggle against the temptation to worship other people and other things.

Revelation 22:10-11.

10       And  
          he said to me,  
          "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book,  
                          for the time is near.  
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."

These verses tell us two things.

First, we see that there are no more tangible events in God's plan of redemption that must occur before Jesus comes.

In the book of Daniel, he was told to seal up his prophecy because what he spoke of referred to events long in the future.

**Daniel 12:9-10** <sup>9</sup> He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. <sup>10</sup> Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.

But here in Revelation we see that John was living in the "last days" in the 1<sup>st</sup> C. AD. Do not think that this is not true because it has been 2,000 years and Jesus has not returned. We do not know the years that must occur before Jesus returns. But we do know that His return is near, because there is nothing else that must happen in terms of our redemption before He comes. He will simply appear one day in the sky.

The second thing is that when Jesus returns, there will no longer be any time for repentance.

Our character will be set like concrete.

Until Jesus returns, there is hope for change.

But that time for change will come to an end... for better or for worse.

Now is the time to repent of your sin and believe in Jesus.

Do not wait. For there will come a time when it will be too late.

Read Revelation 22:12-15.

12 "Behold,  
I am coming soon,  
bringing my recompense with me,  
to repay everyone 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.

As glorious as the end will be for believers, for unbelievers, who have not washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, there is only darkness and pain.

Read Revelation 22:16.

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."

Jesus emphatically declares that He is the Messiah.  
He is the long hoped for "Son of David".  
And He is the bright morning star who would usher in the New Day!  
There is no other Messiah other than Jesus.  
All others who make this claim are imposters. Only Jesus can reverse the work of Satan  
and make all things new.

Verse 17 is a response to the declaration of Jesus being the Son of David and the bright  
morning star.

Read Revelation 22:17.

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.

When the Spirit and the bride say, "Come" who are they talking to?  
They are calling upon King Jesus to come.  
It is an expression of worship.  
In essence they are saying, "We want you to return."

The very same Greek expression is used in I Corinthians 16:22.

**1 Corinthians 16:22** <sup>22</sup> If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our  
Lord, come!

The Holy Spirit, now dwelling in the Church, certainly rejoices to see the return of Christ.

But it is equally true that the Church, as the Bride of Christ, yearns for the coming of her Groom.

In fact, what we are being told is that having a yearning for the coming of Christ is a fundamental yearning of the Christian. It is one primary way in which we express our faith in Jesus Christ.

This is why the cry of the Spirit and the Bride is followed up with an exhortation. Let the one who hears say, "Come."

Revelation has taught us about the beauty and glory of our Savior.  
Revelation has taught us about the end of all evil.  
Revelation has taught us about our "happily ever after" with Christ.

Do you want these things?

Do you want to see Jesus, face to face?  
Do you want evil to be eradicated completely? Even from your own heart?  
Do you want to live under His kingship?

The cry of salvation is a cry for Jesus to come into your heart and to dwell with you forever.

This is the same cry, only it includes Jesus' return in all His glory.

One way to test your own heart is to ask yourself, "Do I want Jesus to come?"

Imagine telling your boyfriend or girlfriend, "I really love you, but I really am in no hurry to get married to you. Let's keep putting off the wedding day."

There are legitimate reasons in this life to wait to get married. But if you love someone, the natural expression of that love is to yearn to be married to them.

Love drives a person to give themselves to that person.  
Love seeks fullness of fellowship with the object of its love.  
Love expresses itself in commitment and devotion to the welfare of another.  
Marriage is the ultimate expression of these things.

Jesus has extended His love to the Bride.

And the Bride yearns to experience the fullness of that love and to give her love in return.

Christian, how are you responding to Jesus' words: I am coming soon!  
Are you responding by saying, "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!"

Christian, have you ever confessed to your Savior that your love for Him is not what it should be?

Have you ever told Him honestly that you often really only want Him to make your life in this world better, that you don't really want him to come, not just yet anyway?

The book of Revelation is intended to be awakening to us as Christians. Jesus gives us a glimpse of the future so that we will yearn for that future in the present.

Jesus knows that we struggle to yearn for our wedding day. If we didn't, we would not have needed the book of Revelation.

If you can admit to Him your lack of love, He will take you into His arms and gently hold you. And as He does this, He will increase your love for Him.

But some will not hear the words of Jesus in Revelation. Some will go on living their lives secretly hoping that the return will never come.

Paul in I Corinthians 16 is emphatic about the future of that person: Let him be accursed.

The book of Revelation is primarily speaking to the members of the Visible Church. Even as members of the Church, we need to hear the call to love our Savior.

But there is one more cry in verse 17.

And  
let the one who is thirsty  
                  come;  
let the one who desires  
                  take the water of life  
                  without price.

This final cry is not directed towards Jesus.

It is the call of the Church to everyone who will hear to come to Jesus.

Christianity is not about drumming up a love for Jesus on your own.

Christianity is recognizing your lack of love for Jesus.

Christianity is a recognition of your own emptiness.

This is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

We are to yearn for Jesus to come.

But before we can ever do this, we must hear His call to us.

Come to me, He says.

I will give you the waters of life, without price to you.

Whether it is the first time that you have heard the gospel, or if you have been a Christian for years, the first motion of your heart is always to come to Jesus for Him to impart to you the waters of life.

Faith is not something you exercise once at the beginning of your Christian life.  
Faith is something that you exercise every day.  
I come to you needing refreshment.  
I am dry and thirsty.  
Give the waters of life to me afresh.

Brothers and sisters, do not fall into the trap of turning Christianity into a religion of human effort. We are to exercise effort in our devotion to Christ. But we are like a three year old cell phone battery. We are in constant need of recharging.

The older I get; I feel my need of Christ more frequently. I have not grown stronger such that I need fewer and fewer times of being recharged. Just the opposite. I feel my need of Him even more frequently.

Our love for Christ is always the result of receiving His love for us.

If you are convicted of your lack of yearning for Christ, your lack of love for Him, do not think to yourself, "I have to do better."

And then, I will be worthy of Jesus' love.  
This gets it all backwards.

Confess your emptiness before him.  
Receive from Him the waters of life, without price.  
Only after drinking deeply, should you then renew your devotion to Him.

Drink... and then strive...  
Not: if only I can strive more... maybe I will one day drink...

**Galatians 3:2-3** <sup>2</sup> Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? <sup>3</sup> Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Revelation calls us to be conquerors.  
But the only way that we can ever conquer is by learning to drink frequently of the waters of life.

The Spirit comes to us as we believe.

Read Revelation 22:18-19.

18 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.

19

As John closes his letter, he reminds us that the message of the Gospel never changes. Just like Paul in Galatians pronounced curses upon anyone who changed the Gospel, so John pronounces the same curse upon anyone who would alter the message of the Gospel.

The Bible is enough.  
Its message is complete.  
It proclaims to us very difficult pills to swallow.  
We cannot take away the reality of the Final Judgment and the eternal Lake of Fire.  
But neither can we add to glories of the New Heavens and New Earth, as if to say that what has been promised is not enough.

The Bible is God's revelation of Himself to us.  
And until we see Him face to face, we must content ourselves with what He has given to us in His Word.

Our faith must rest solely upon the Scriptures.  
The warning of taking away your share in the tree of life is not given to make you think that Jesus could lose one of His own.

It is designed to challenge you to continue believing in Christ alone for your salvation.  
Humanly speaking, we struggle to continue believing.  
In this warning, we see that our continued belief matters.

Those who truly belong to Christ, will continue drinking of Him.  
And they will by grace alone continue believing in Him.

This is why John ends with the benediction!

Read Revelation 22:20-21.

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.

"Yes, Lord Jesus, I want you to come and to finish the work you have begun in my heart. I want you to make all things right. I want to stand before You complete. Whatever dregs of sin that remain in me, I want you to burn them away. I want to know you and to dwell in your presence eternally."

I know that each of you are in a different place.

You may be wrestling with whether you want Jesus to return today.

And audibly saying words is not the same thing as meaning them in your heart.

But if you are believing in Jesus Christ, then the Holy Spirit does live in you. And it is His deepest yearning for Jesus to return.

So, I want you to respond.

I am going to say Jesus' words...

And then we are all going to respond together with: Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

Ready: Behold, I am coming soon!

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

Repeat if necessary!