I Am Coming Soon

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[0:00] Good morning, guys. Can you guys hear me? Yeah. It's a joy to worship with you guys. And I got to say, we've done it. We've made it through 38 weeks and sermons through the book of Revelation. From the introduction to the letters to the churches in Asia Minor, through seals and bulls and trumpets, through beasts and prostitutes and dragons, to the final battle of Armageddon, to the new heavens and the new earth, we are finally at the last passage of the book of Revelation. What a glorious, Christ-exalting book it has been. Amen?

So let's turn our Bibles to Revelation 22, 6 to 21. Of course, as always, if you are in need of a Bible, please just raise your hand and one of our members would happily gift you a Bible for you to keep. Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word. Heavenly Father, may you bless the reading, the preaching and teaching of your Word today. Father, I pray that you would multiply the measly five loaves and two fish that I've prepared to feed the masses. Do what only you can do by your Spirit's power? We await for you to come, Lord Jesus. In your name we pray. Amen.
To honor God's Word, let's all rise, if you are able, for the reading of God's Word in Revelation 22, 6 to 21. It says this, 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. And behold, I am coming soon.
[2:04] Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me.

But he said to me, you must not do that. I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers, their prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.
And he said to me, do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. Let the evildoer still do evil, and let the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.
Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me to repay each one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.
Blessed are those who wash their robes so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.
[3:19] I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and descendant 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. This is God's holy and authoritative word. You may be seated. Long ago, there once was a boy who lived in the distant freezing prairies.
[4:41] Came from a poor family. Every member of his family had to struggle, labor day and night just to afford the bare essentials.

His entire existence, his life was gray, dark, depressing. But one day, the boy's father sent him to the nearest town square to fetch some supplies.

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In a rush to get home before dark, the boy inadvertently bumps into this tall, burly businessman. He's wearing foreign, exotic clothing, things that he's never seen before.
And upon seeing the boy's poor estate, the businessman, he sticks his hand in his pocket. And he reaches out to give something to the boy.
And it's a vibrant, bright orange. Something that the boy had never seen in his entire life. And upon instruction, the boy starts to peel the glowing skin off with his gray hands.
[5:52] And he takes his first bite. His eyes widen. His smile uncontainable. He had never tasted something in his entire life. So sweet.

So delicious. So lively. So colorful. So he asks the man, where did this come from? Where can I get more of this?
And again, out of pity for the boy, the man invites him, if you want to come to this land, I will return for you soon one day.
But the time is short. You must be prepared and packed, ready to go immediately upon my arrival. The boy hurriedly, quickly said, yes, I will go.
And before he could run off to go home to pack, the man slips a handwritten note in the boy's pocket and sees him run off. Immediately, the first thing when the boy gets home is that he starts telling everyone that he knows, all his friends, all his family, about the experience that he had, about the fruit that he ate, the man that he met.
[7:05] But no one would believe him. Undeterred, he packed his bag and he sat right on his front door and he waited. And he waited and he waited and there was no sign of the man.

Eventually, days turned into weeks. Weeks turned into months. Months turned into years. Throughout that time, those in his life ridiculed him, mocked him, saying, why are you waiting? What are you doing? He had to continue to work, brutal work, and eventually, this harsh hand-to-mouth living, the constant ridicule, and the long waiting began to weigh heavy upon the boy.
But what was his source of encouragement throughout that time? It was the handwritten note that the band gave to him. And what did it say? He said, I am coming soon.
Brothers and sisters, this is our story. Don't you see? We can relate to this, can't we? We have tasted of heaven's fruits. We know that it's foreign to anything that this land can produce.
[8:24] This land only produces fruit of bitterness and hatred and anger. But we have tasted of love, of joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

We have tasted of the fruit that only the land of heaven can bear. We know that heaven is a real place. But the harsh reality of living, the constant ridicule, the long waiting, it starts to weigh heavy upon us, doesn't it?
But knowing our condition and our need for encouragement, Jesus has slipped us this handwritten note, this same note, to take heart because he is coming soon.
That's the main point of my passage, or this passage, and my sermon. Keep the trustworthy words of this book because Jesus is coming soon.
And in turn, we'll look at three simple exhortations. That we have to trust in this prophecy, trust that he will come soon. We have to obey because of this prophecy, and we have to desire this prophecy.
[9:35] So first, trusting in this prophecy. Let's talk about this. Jesus begins his last words in the epilogue of this letter in the same way that he starts the letter in chapter one.

In fact, much of this epilogue is very, very close to the prologue, forming a really kind of nice inclusio, if you know that word, right? Bookend. And it's a clear link that packages all the letter altogether.
And he wants to remind us that everything that we have read and studied throughout these past 38 weeks is trustworthy and true. He wants us to know that this prophecy is not, it's not a mere hypothesis.
It's not an educated guess of what might happen in the future. It teaches us cold, hard, objective truth that Jesus will return for us one day.
And that when he does, that he will come in total power to conquer all of our enemies. And that when he comes, we will reign with him in the new heavens and the new earth.
[10:41] How sweet that day will be. In fact, this is repeated throughout our text over and over again. Jesus says this three times, I am coming soon.

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In verse seven, verse 12, verse 20, you think he's trying to get us to pay attention to that? Biblical authors, just like we do, they repeat themselves to make sure that a certain point is made clear.
But you might be wondering, Jesus, this letter is almost 2,000 years old. You still haven't returned. Is this really soon? When Jesus says that he is coming soon, I think we'd do well to read the word also suddenly or quickly.
Because I don't think that Jesus is speaking necessarily definitively on when he is going to come, but how he is going to return. He is going to come like a thief, quickly and suddenly, with no warning before.
[11:49] And that means that every generation that has come and gone has done right to think that they might be the last generation. We might be the last generation.

Every birthday you celebrate, every new year that you celebrate, we would do well to remember that this could literally be the last year of your life because Jesus is coming soon.
Moreover, elsewhere in Scripture, Apostle Peter writes, with the Lord, one day is as 1,000 years and 1,000 years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient towards you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.
Peter shows us that the fact that Jesus hasn't returned for almost 2,000 years is not evidence for us to doubt his return, but it's evidence of his long suffering, his forbearance for us sinners.
And to further attest to the truthfulness of these claims, in the second half of this verse, Jesus reminds us ultimately who is the one who sent this messenger angel. It is God the Father himself.
[13:10] Everything that the angel has shown John, however hard it is to believe, it's true and it has God's name behind it. It has his own reputation behind it.

And we know from other parts in Scripture that it is impossible for God to lie. Moreover, Jesus calls the Father the God of the spirits of the prophets.
What does that mean? Now, I think it's pointing to hundreds of biblical prophecies that have been fulfilled, that have come true, that they're accurately predicted the future.
For example, a whopping 200 years before this could ever happen, there's no way that Isaiah could know this, but 200 years before, Isaiah predicted the specific name of the Persian king, King Cyrus, who would come to take power.
conquer Babylon and send Israel back home after their exile. Not only does John teach us that God the Father is behind this, but in verse 16, if you look down, you get God the Son who is saying the exact same thing.
[14:25] He is the one who sent his angel. And guess what? He is the fulfillment of hundreds of messianic prophecies. For example, in our text, Jesus proclaims that he is the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.

These are all just Old Testament messianic prophecies that predicted that Christ will come and Christ fulfilled. You see that they're just piling on piece of evidence after evidence.
the huge pile of all these fulfilled, accurately predicted prophecies. So that we would see this pile, see all this evidence, and see that this prophecy that Jesus will return, we can trust.
We can believe. We can understand that this will come true. This is absolutely a timely word for us today because our society balks at us for accepting this as objective truth.
You see, since the scientific revolution, our society is increasingly becoming only naturalistic or proponents of the belief of I'm only going to believe what I can feel with my own two hands or see with my own two eyes.
[15:41] I believe in science and the rigors of the scientific method. they ask us, so, you believe that this ancient primitive dude, John, from 2,000 years ago who had no idea what DNA or cells or gravity or the internet or any of these things, he had no idea about these things.

You're saying that he is the one to accurately predict the future, the end of the world, and that it would happen at the hands of a Jewish carpenter? To them, it sounds preposterous.
Well, only because their worldview, their preconceived notions, they limit themselves and they make no room for the possibility of a supernatural God.
Only the things that are natural can be understood or felt. But they look down upon the religious without realizing that they too have religious beliefs.
Just ask them where and how the universe began. How did life begin? How did consciousness begin? You're going to notice that they're going to start searching for words like belief and faith.

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[16:56] I believe that life started randomly. I believe that the universe came from nothing. I have faith in science. That's why ultimately the ex-atheist, now pastor, author Lee Strobel has said this about his conversion to Christianity.

To continue in atheism, I need to believe nothing produces everything. Non-life produces life. Randomness produces fine-tuning. Chaos produces information.
Unconsciousness produces consciousness. And non-reason produces reason. I just didn't have that much faith. Ah, but if you do make room for the possibility of God, a supernatural, spiritual God who can do anything by the power of his word, then what seems so far-fetched now lands squarely in the realm of possibility.
And by the empowering work of the Spirit, we see that it's more than that. It's more than just being in the realm of possibility or even probability, but in the realm of absolute certainty.
In the same way that statements like two plus two equals four, or that murder is evil, we all know that those are objectively true statements, right?
[18:25] Christ will return is just as true as those things. We're not to hedge our bets like French philosopher Blaise Pascal has once posited with what's known as the Pascal's Wager, and I think I have this slide to kind of help you guys understand what it is.

It's a simple premise, really. It's that we should believe just in case. Christianity is true, that God exists, and you don't believe, then you're in this right, bottom left quadrant, eternal damnation.
But if you do believe in God, and God doesn't exist, then what happens? You're in that top right quadrant, right? You're, nothing really happens, finite losses. I guess you, you know, missed out on Sundays to sleep in.
You should believe, so it goes, because it's worse to be in this bottom left to be in the top right, just in case. But if you read our passage, this may make logical sense.
This is not the tone of which John is writing. It doesn't say believe just in case. No, Christ will return because these words are trustworthy and true.
[19:42] In your heart of hearts, do you know and believe this? Do you know and believe that Jesus will soon return for his own? They say the idea of death is the ultimate test of what you believe.

Imagine closing your eyes on your deathbed. Do you have full faith that you will open them to see paradise and the presence of the God you love?
Do you really believe that? do you struggle with doubt? Do you have tinges of wondering, is this really true?
Am I a victim of groupthink from the people around me? Will there be a new life, a supernatural life awaiting me after death?
And if you struggle with doubt as I do, cling to this book. That's why the book of Revelation is not to be feared, it's not to be dreaded, it's not to groan every time it comes up on your yearly Bible reading plan.
[20:54] It's a book that reminds us that despite all the evil and pain in our lives, Christ will return to make all that is wrong right.

And in the end, praise God that it is not the strength of our faith, the strength of our convictions that saves us, but it's the object of it.
It's the strength, it's the object, not the strength of our faith that saves us. So if you do believe that Christ will return, what sort of people ought you be?
Peter continues to write, the day of the Lord will come like a thief and the works that are done on it will be exposed. What sort of people ought you be in lives of holiness and godliness waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of the Lord?
So this brings me to the second exhortation of this passage, obey because Jesus is coming soon. So what does preparing well for Jesus look like?
[22:02] In verse seven, I think we get a glimpse. We see it looks like keeping, obeying, guarding the words of this very book. More specifically, I think our passage gives us three directions on how we are supposed to get ready.

First, obedience to the coming Jesus looks like whole hearted, single-minded worship. worship. Verses eight to nine, the second time at the end of Revelation, really in quick succession, John wrongly falls at the feet of the messenger, not the one who sent the message.

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The angel gives then the same reason, the same rebuttal. Why are you doing this? We are equals. Worship God. Theologians have called this the creator-creature distinction, creation, meaning that God alone is uncreated.
God alone is truly independent, meaning that he is dependent on nothing and no one for his existence. Literally everything else in all the creation falls into this other bucket of created, even powerful, powerful angels.
So we're all in the same bucket. Why worship anything else? Makes no logical sense. But lest you think that this is an easy command to obey?
[23:29] To see how the great capital A Apostle John falls victim to this sin really twice, quickly. And while it may not be angels or literal idols that we fall down to worship, what created thing do you worship?

Are we prone to worship money, marriage, ministry, our parents, our friends, ourselves?
Anything that you say, I need to have X, I need to have Y to be happy, that's an idol. If you are discontent today, you are worshiping idols.
The real test of our faith, of our worship, is that we come, it's good that we come Sunday worship and worship our holy God together. The real test is on Monday morning.
Who is it that you worship? For honest with ourselves, and we do see idol worship, not this single minded, wholehearted worship, we must get ready for his return by doing the hard, hard work, picking up our hammers, and smashing these idols.
[24:50] idols. Honestly, I could smash an idol in my heart every single day. Heck, it could be my full-time job.

But it's hard work, but it's necessary work, because God alone is worthy of this wholehearted worship. And so that Christ may receive the worship he is due, we get our second direction.
To get ready in verse 10, it says this, do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. John is told, don't seal up this book, because how else will the churches know its contents and its commands?
This is a different command that he gave to prophets in the Old Testament. To the prophet Daniel, he said, seal it up. The time is not ready. But for John, he says, don't seal it up.
The time is near. In the same way, we are not to seal up this book to others in our evangelism. We must keep telling people that Jesus is coming back soon, urgently and sensitively.
[26:06] when was the last time that you told somebody Jesus is coming soon? Most people find evangelism offensive, but not all.

For example, Penn Gillette, you guys know him as the famous magician from the duo Penn and Teller. He's also a staunch agnostic, very outspoken, but he has this keen insight.
He says this, if you believe that there is a heaven and a hell, and people are going to hell or not getting eternal life, and you think that it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward, how much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize?
How much do you have to hate somebody to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that? If I believe beyond the shadow of a doubt that a truck was coming at you, and you didn't believe that that truck was bearing down on you, there is a certain point that I tackle you, where I tackle you.
And this is more important than that. I remind you that this is an atheist saying this. And now, this is no recommendation to start tackling people with the gospel, to lose all senses of our sensitivity and offend unnecessarily in our evangelism.
[27:37] No, it's not to do that. Nor is it a recommendation to start evangelizing because we feel guilty about it. See, guilt is a terrible motivator. It never lasts.

And it's never done to the worship of our God. God. But we ought to start, we ought to continue to evangelize this lost world because we want to worship God and because we want to see every heart worship Him.
It is the heart of a Christian to see God's name lifted on high in every heart, in every household, on every street, in every city, in every nation. Only He is worthy of this worship.
And that desire, that worship is what's going to fuel happy, guilt-free, lasting evangelism in our lives.
But then what about verse 11?
Maybe some of you guys had that question reading this earlier. It's probably the hardest verse in our passage today. It sounds like there is no opportunity to change when it says that, let the evil and

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filthy still do evil, still be filthy.
[28:54] These are hard words for us, but this truth is nothing new in Scripture. Because you see that the message of the gospel is a message of life to those who believe, to those whose names are written in the book of life.

But the message of the gospel is simultaneously a message of condemnation to those who reject Christ, who do not believe. believe. Elsewhere in Romans 1, Paul tells us and explains that those who do not want to acknowledge God, who pursue their own way, God gives them up to do exactly just that.
That's his punishment out of them, giving them exactly what they want. And so they go on to choose things that lead to death and destruction. But for God's elect, his church praise God that he did not give us what we wanted.
If we got what we wanted, we would be on the same path. Instead, he gives us new hearts with new desires to desire the truly good, the truly satisfying.
So these commands in verse 11 to do evil are ultimately a pronouncement of judgment against all those who have rejected Christ. He's saying, keep going.
[30:22] Keep going on the path that you started down. But for the righteous and his chosen, he's saying, keep doing good onto me. Understanding then God's sovereignty in our salvation, does that mean that there is no point in our salvation or in our evangelism?

The fact of the matter is that we do not know. We don't know who will come to faith. Very few in the early church ever believed, could ever believe that Paul, the fierce Jewish persecutor of the church, could turn into the great apostle, the faithful apostle.
It is the mystery of the spirit that some seeds that we scatter bear fruit thirtyfold, hundredfold. Others are completely choked out.
Ultimately, it is freeing for us to know that conversion is not, it's not up to us. It's not ultimately of how well we evangelize, how well we answer all these apologetics questions.
It's up to God. So we need to keep evangelizing with freedom, with urgency, with sensitivity and to tell people, anyone, everyone, that Jesus is coming soon.
[31:45] This is how we get ourselves ready. This is how we get our others in our lives ready. For when Jesus, the Alpha and the Omega, the one whom the entire universe revolves around, once he returns, verse 12 teaches us that he will bring his recompense with him to repay each one for what he has done.

Scripture, both the New and the, both the Old and the New Testament teaches that we will be judged according to our works. Therefore, we should take holiness, obedience, discipleship to Christ very seriously.
We should never take sin lightly. Even socially acceptable sins like gossip or greed or grumbling. We would all do well to sober-mindedly evaluate ourselves once in a while to see if we are in obedience to God's rules.
Some of us don't like that word, rules, especially we want to focus on the relationship. I'm all about the relationship. I'm not about rules. But I need to remind you that every relationship has rules.
My marriage has lots of good rules for me to follow. Like be faithful. No other women. That's rule number one for sure. Number two, be nice.
[33:16] Don't use harsh words. Be gentle. Number three, buy ice cream often. If we love God, we need to keep his rules and be sensitive and careful to pursue holiness.

After all, if you're not pursuing holiness in this life, is heaven a holy place with a holy God among holy saints?
Is that really a place that you want to go? Puritan J.C. Ryle has asked, suppose for a moment that you were allowed to enter heaven without holiness.
What would you do? What possible enjoyment could you feel there? To which all the saints, would you join yourself? By whose side would you sit? Their pleasures are not your pleasures.
Their tastes are not your tastes. Their character, not your character. If you dislike a holy God now, why would you want to be with him forever? If ungodliness is your delight here on earth, what will please you in heaven where all is clean and pure?
[34:27] You will not be happy there if you are not holy here. But that's all a moot proposition because holiness is required to enter into the city.

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In verse 15 of our passage, we're warned very clearly that those who practice and love sin, they are the ones who are outside of the city of God.
See, the invitation to the wedding feast is open to everybody. Everybody and anybody can come. But there is a dress code.
That idea that Jesus will come to judge the work of my life, the idea that there's a dress code, that has honestly terrified me for many parts, many seasons of my life.
I've wondered often at times, am I doing enough for Christ? Do I need to do more? Have I lived a good enough life?
[35:36] If you're wondering with me, you're wondering what that answer is going to be as you stand on that judgment seat before a holy God at the end of your life, let me spoil it for you.

Answers are a resounding no. We have not done enough. We have not lived good enough lives. We cannot save ourselves by our good works because the standard is perfection. We must be perfect as our holy father in heaven is perfect. We have instead followed in the footsteps of our forefather Adam in his rebellion against God.
And we wanted to be our own gods. We wanted to do what we wanted. And our unrighteousness rightfully kicked us out of the garden without access to the tree of life, to be wanderers, sojourners, without a true home.
But praise be to God almighty that when he came to the earth, Jesus Christ lived a life in which he never doubted.
[36:46] Am I doing enough? Have I lived a good enough life? Because for Jesus, those answers were a resounding yes. He died yet outside of the city of God on that rugged cross, as if he was the worst of sinners, so that we can be invited inside the city of God.

See, that substitutionary death, that fountain of blood that flowed, is, was, and will be our only hope for salvation. Therefore, our entry ticket back into the city, back into the garden, is not our insufficient obedience, but it is the free, cleansing blood and righteousness of Christ the Lamb.
And so the third and final command to get ready for Jesus' return is to repent of our sins, to get our attires ready, and to wash our stained robes in his blood.
I have to ask, are you ready? Are you ready for Christ to return soon? He is beckoning for you to come, so tarry not if you are not ready.
Verse 17 says, 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 to take the water of life without price.
[38:16] These are all the same invitation, just repeated over and over, to drive home this point, to drive home this invitation, to come. To come, all you need is your need.

Whosoever may come. Young sinners, old sinners, come. Rich sinners, poor sinners, come. Backsliding sinners, lustful sinners, drunk sinners, addicted sinners, come. Whosoever may come. Whosoever may come. Sinners that have done every sin in the book, from A to Z, come.
Jesus is calling earnestly and tenderly, O sinner, come home. When you come to Christ for your forgiveness, it's not that our obedience isn't important anymore, that we're free to do whatever we want.
No, it's those whose sins are forgiven, who take killing sin the most seriously. But it's not done by our own strength, you see.
[39:24] It's from the Spirit who dwells within you to empower you to obedience for the necessary good works for salvation.

See, your good works are necessary for salvation, but they're never the basis of your salvation. That basis is Christ's blood, Christ's righteousness alone. As great late pastor Tim Keller has written, God's salvation does not come in response to a changed life.
A changed life comes in response to the salvation offered as a free gift. We have to get that order right. But maybe you're in a season of discouragement, and you feel like you're taking one step forward, and then just three steps back.
You feel like you're disobeying more than you are obeying. But notice, in verse 15, that last descriptor of the outsiders, they love, they practice falsehood.
They love it. Even members of the Church of Christ, we can fall in sin. We all know that all too well. But what distinguishes us is that we hate our sin.
[40:43] We repent of it. We want to flee from it. But those on the outside, they love it. They cherish it. They teach it. They encourage it. It's one thing to fall into sin, but it's a totally other, to

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teach and promote disobedience to God.

And that's why God will take away salvation from false teachers in verse 18 to 19. It's taken from Deuteronomy 4 and 12.
This warning is not just against general disobedience. No, it's much more serious than that. God warns all false teachers, all followers of those teachers who twist his infallible salvific word by adding and taking away from Scripture to promote their own agenda, not God's.
God has given us this precious gift of his word. It is able to make us wise for salvation. Will God not have vengeance on those who add and take this away, who twist this to say whatever they want? Therefore, the only fitting punishment for those who add and take away from God's word is that God will add to them plagues, that God will take away their apparent share of their portion of the tree of life.
[42:15] False teachers, wolves disguised as sheep, they initially seem and appear to be part of us, one of God's people, but we will know them by their works, that they were never part of us in the first place.

These serious warnings are just another reminder that sin has perverted everything that was once good. And that's why we need to desire for Christ to return, which is the third and final point.
Do you know that to live is Christ and to die is gain? It is for your gain that Christ comes back soon. I know many of us are young, still have lots of life to live. I know that there's still a lot of milestones that you guys want to experience, like you want to get married and raise a family and progress in your career, travel the world, experience the best that the world has to offer.
And so, sometimes we say, oh Jesus, we want you to come, but you know, give me like 10 more years. Give me a little bit more time. Don't come just yet.
[43:37] But can I ask, as C.S. Lewis once asked, has this world been so kind to you? That you should leave it with regret? Hasn't all your work, all your life, all of your experience been tainted by sin and suffering?

Do you really think that your future career, your future marriage, your family, your wealth won't be tainted too? There's something far better than this. Again, quoting C.S. Lewis, he reminds us that often Satan doesn't try to convince us that heaven isn't real.
Oh no, he's much craftier than that. He tries to convince us that heaven is boring. Have you ever heard of that? That, oh, I don't want really, I'm not interested in heaven because I don't want to worship, you know, 24-7, all 365.
Heaven is anything but boring. Holiness is anything but boring. I think the church needs to resurrect this lost spiritual discipline of biblical imagination and yearning for heaven.
I think most of us, again, me included, we don't long for heaven enough. We get too bogged down by the cares of this life to remember that another one is coming soon.
[45:03] And so to help us with that, I invite you to imagine with me about heaven. I want you to actually close your eyes, don't fall asleep, but I want you to close your eyes as I read some excerpts of this article that I modified just to help us imagine what heaven will be like.

So imagine this, seeing the full blazing glory of God, finally understanding how the prophets couldn't put that sight into words.
Imagine this, what does that look like to you? Imagine a world where beautiful, soul-satisfying music to your God never ends, that you can't help but sing at the top of your lungs.
Imagine you won't be wishing it was louder or quieter, you'll not be distracted by anything off-key, in fact, you won't be nervous about when the music will end.
Imagine never worrying about any good thing ending and that every sad thing becoming untrue.
Imagine that spiritual high from a retreat or missions trip that you've experienced never fading, never suffering from entropy, but somehow inexplicably keeps growing and growing.
[46:34] Imagine seeing the face of Christ face to face, looking into the eyes of the one who formed the sun, moon, and stars in the beginning but who knew and loved you even before that.

Imagine a sinless, flawless, glorified body with no earthly, ungodly temptations. These bodies that have absolutely no appetite for the things of this world.
That holiness, purity, and godliness isn't such a terrible struggle anymore, but that loving Christ and others is easy, natural, restful.
Image that you decide it's time to take a rest, never because you're sick with disease or weary or suffer from chronic pain, but just because.

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And you lie down beside still waters without any fear of harm, without worry that you're not being as productive as you should be, without being distracted by having so much to do.
[47:41] imagine meeting with people who treated you wickedly, who lied about you, who gossiped about you, who stole from you, maybe even murdered you.

Imagine what that would feel like. And then you see brothers and sisters and children and parents that you treated wickedly, that you lied or gossiped about, stole from, or even murdered.
When you see them, instead of shame or fear, you know that all the justice everyone deserved for all the wrongs was poured out completely on the head of the husband.
So you don't owe each other anything anymore because you could have everything you could ever want. So now you're free to love. So you take their hand in yours and you walk with them in love forever.
You guys can open up your eyes. Thanks for indulging me. Brothers and sisters, this is just a snippet of what our future might be like for all eternity.
[48:46] Heaven will be anything but boring. How can you wait? Come, Lord Jesus. That's the heart. That's our prayer. Come, Lord Jesus.

So we come to the very last verse of Scripture. Last verse of our passage and the very last verse of Scripture. And I think it's really quite beautiful that Scripture ends with a benediction.
Just like we close our worship services. It's beautiful that the final word of His holy book is not what we need to do or what we produce.
It's not our worship unto God. But it's God's words of blessing to us. This is exactly what we need.
In a moment, we'll respond to this sermon by singing all together the song Grace Alone.
And I want to read the last verse of that song. I'll stand in faith by grace and grace alone. I'll run the race by grace and grace alone.
[49:50] I'll slay my sin by grace and grace alone. I will reach the end by grace and grace alone.
By grace and grace alone, we will trust in Christ's return.

Lord, we will persevere in the worship of our holy God. We will evangelize this lost world and we will make it to the celestial city, to that promised land, that land we're all waiting for.
So until Christ returns, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. Amen. Heavenly Father, we pray that you would bestow upon us the grace that we need to look, to hope for heaven, and to endure to the very end, to be conquerors, to be overcomers, so that we would see you, and see you in full glory.
We long for that day. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

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