

Keep Your Head Up  
*Jesus Is Coming Soon*

A Sermon on Rev. 22:12-17,20  
Year C - Easter 7  
29 - May - 2022

JJ<sup>1</sup>

A little voice echoes through the house at midnight: "Mommy! I'm thirsty!" She responds, "I'll be right there, honey." What may seem like just a moment to mommy is an eternity to a toddler. "Mommy, I need you now. What's taking so long?"

The older we get, the more we start sounding like that little child all over again. But instead of calling out for our mothers, we call out to our Savior, Jesus, "Lord, where are you? What's taking so long? When are you going to return?" What is only a moment for Jesus, is a lifetime for us. As the struggle against sin, the hatred of the world, and the weariness of life grows, we long more and more for Jesus' return. At the same time we're tempted more and more to give up and hang our heads low in shame. Today you are encouraged to **KEEP YOUR HEAD UP** in joyful expectation because **JESUS IS COMING SOON**.

The visions have ended and John's angelic tour guide has left. And just as this amazing day of visions began, they end with Jesus coming to John and speaking to him directly. **Behold, I am coming soon!** Now we hear Jesus say "soon" and perhaps wonder, "What's Jesus' definition of that word? It's been 2,000 years!" While the Greek word does

mean "soon" or "quickly," it would help us not only to remember that God's view of time is different than our own, but also to consider that the word can be translated "without delay." God's plan, which he made in eternity and set into motion when he created the world, will not be delayed. Nothing will get in the way. Nothing stopped him when he came the first time. Nothing will stop him from returning according to his plan.

When he does come, Jesus will say, **My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.** Jesus points to judgment day when he will come and sit on his judge's throne. And notice how he will judge. He will not judge and reward people *because* of what they have done, but *according* to what they have done. While you might not see a difference, there is. To reward *because* of what you have done means that you have earned it. But for Jesus to reward *according* to what you have done means that he rewards according to what your deeds reflect. A heart of faith reflects itself in the good works it does out of love and thanksgiving for God. A heart of unbelief reflects itself through a life of disobedience. Just as Jesus promised in chapter 2: **Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life** (Rev. 2:10).

<sup>1</sup> JJ is the acronym for *Jesus Juve*, which is Latin for "Jesus Help". It is a short prayer used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the beginning of their work.

But how can you be certain that you will **have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates of the city?** Jesus tells you. **Blessed are those who wash their robes...** This brings us back to one of John's earlier visions we heard a few weeks ago where the angel told John that God's people **[wash] their robes and [make] them white in the blood of the Lamb** (Rev. 7:14). Your certainty is found in Christ, and him alone. He is the one who lived an innocent life for you. He is the one who suffered hell and died in your place and then rose again in victory. And through the gift of faith, you are connected to Christ so that all he is and has done are yours, assuring you that Jesus is right there with you. Therefore you **have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.**

But **Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.** What a comfort to know that in heaven you will have perfect peace. Not one wicked act or person will breach the gates of your heavenly home. Yet at the same time, this list of outsiders, of dogs, also calls you to repentance since you all can find yourself in this list to one degree or another. Maybe you haven't tried to control God and his creation with

the devil's power, but how often haven't you desired to bend God to your will rather than you bending to his? Your heart lusts and hates and hurts. You don't always give God the #1 place in your heart. You lie. For these sins, for all your sins, you must plead guilty and turn to the Lamb of forgiveness. Otherwise you end up like Judas. Then you are left outside with the dogs who have no share in the tree of life.

To keep this from happening, Jesus himself provides all that you need. **I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I AM the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.** Christ gives you his holy Word which reveals that he is David's Root. Jesus is that

great Descendant who would come from David's line to save the world. His Word also shows you that Jesus is **the bright Morning Star.** Through faith in him and his Word, Jesus brings you into his light so that you may see that he is already standing with you here in this life even as he rules from his throne in heaven. You are also assured that one day, in that new eternal day, you shall live with him where there will never be night!

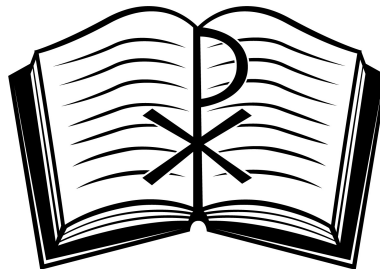
Now notice the response of God's people when they receive Jesus' forgiveness and are washed clean in his blood. **The Spirit**



**and the Bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.**

This, friends, is how you as Christ's Bride respond to your Groom's love for you. You call out to all people, saying, "Come! It's here for the taking! Come and drink of the free gift of the water of life!" And how absolutely necessary that we each do this. You see, our spiritual thirst is much like our physical thirst. If everything is working correctly in our bodies, you only know that you're thirsty when your body tells you. By nature, our souls aren't working correctly. Yes, we may notice the spiritual thirst but we can never know how bad it is and what great danger we are in. We also haven't a clue as to how to quench it.

A little child's body can tell the child it is thirsty, but they don't know yet how dangerous their thirst can be or how to properly quench it. Just think if you put two bottles in front of a two year old. One is a bottle of vodka, the other spring water. Except for the labeling, to the child they both look the same but one has dangerous, even deadly consequences if the child tries to quench his thirst with it. The child will only know what's good for him if his parents show him and give him what will give him life.



The same applies spiritually. The world offers all kinds of things to try and quench our spiritual thirst. But there is only one **water of life**. All others will lead to death. And people are only going to know what the true **water of life** is if we bring it to them. Friends, that's how you came to be here today! The invitation was passed on from generation to generation and from nation to nation so that you would receive the **water of life**. And the fact that we know the time is near for Jesus' return only adds urgency to our invitations. To know what Christ has done for us and all the blessings which are now ours eternally, encourages us to carry that invitation with all that we are and have.

Friends, there are little spiritual children around the world and right here in our community crying out in the darkness of a spiritual midnight, "I'm thirsty!" And like a mother bringing her little one exactly what he needs to quench his thirst, friends, you have the only thing that will quench their spiritual thirst. But also make sure you keep on drinking the Word, **the free gift of the water of life**.

So **KEEP YOUR HEAD UP**, because soon the struggle will be over. Soon you'll be forever safe. Soon you shall rest because **JESUS IS COMING SOON**. Keep your head up, and pray with John, **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.**

SDG