

Sermon for Seventh Sunday of Easter, St. Paul's Green Garden, MI

Revelation 22:12-17, 20

¹² "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to 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, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. ¹⁶ "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." ¹⁷ 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. ... ²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Theme: "The Victorious Jesus Has the Final Word"

Intro: The winner gets everything doesn't he? The winning team gets all the praise, even if it was only a one or two point victory, they get another tally in their win column. And if the team wins their sports championship, they get the trophy, the confetti the victory parade in their hometown; AND they are the envy of all the other teams. The winner has the final word.

So it should not surprise us that when Jesus gave his final revelation to the apostle John, he, too has the final word. After all, he has won the greatest of all victories. When Satan tempted him, he resisted. When the teachers of the law and Pharisees taught things that were against the teaching of scripture, he corrected them. When they tried to kill him, he did not allow it UNTIL the right time. So even when they tried to put him to death, THEY could not do so until Jesus and his Father WANTED THEM TO. And they did finally put him to death, they did not defeat him. He became the world's greatest victor. He defeated sin and satan and the worst of all our enemies, he defeated death.

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The book of Revelation holds the inspired words of Jesus to his church. Even though the words and pictures and symbols vary greatly, Jesus' Revelation to John is really a series of seven visions, we could call them instant replays of what we can expect to happen to God's people in the world, and when Jesus comes to call to our eternal home on the last day. And even though many of the pictures look frightening, we hear our Savior's final word and put our trust in it, because he IS the victor. He has won the everlasting championship that no one can take from him. In every human sport, the championship only lasts one year. If a team wants to remain a champion, it has to prove itself all over again. Not Jesus. He IS ALWAYS THE champion. His is a trophy no one can ever take from him. He won his bride, the Holy Christian Church, by his holy life and innocent death. And now in Revelation, he claims the final word. It is a word of invitation; a word of power; and a word of comfort.

I. A Word of Invitation

A. Think back—what is the most exciting invitation you ever received? To take a vacation with someone in your family to a place you've always wanted to go? Was it a chance to have dinner or simply to meet someone you have always admired and looked up to? Or was it an invitation to a join someone for a meal that you knew was going to be extra special?

1. Well listen to the invitation in v. 17. **The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"**

This is an invitation to eat at the marriage feast, WITH your Lord Jesus, IN HEAVEN.

2. True, the invitation comes through the Holy Spirit and the Bride of Christ, namely, the Holy Saints of Christ in heaven. But they offer this rich invitation because it comes FROM Jesus.

3. Sometimes championship teams get an invitation to meet the president at the White House. But that invitation is only for a part of a day. Our invitation is one that lasts forever.
- B. This is not an invitation that we take lightly. You and I have already accepted our Savior's invitation by faith. We are only waiting for everything to be prepared so that we can join our Savior there.
1. But WHILE we are waiting, we listen to our Savior's word, to be strengthened, to be built up in our faith.
 2. And while we listen and wait John says, **"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."**
 3. When Jesus celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles for the last time on earth, he invited people in much the same way. "He said whoever is thirsty let him come to me and drink. To the woman at Jacob's well he said, "I have the water of life."
 4. And what is that water of life? It is nothing less than the forgiveness of sins. And just as you and I have thirsted for forgiveness, so we also invite others to come and receive that thirst quenching drink from Jesus.

Application: Listen to Jesus' word of invitation. Just by the fact that he holds out his gracious hand means we need his forgiveness. Have you taken unfair advantage of someone? Have you spoken ill of someone because of some problem between them and you, but behind their back instead of speaking to that person face to face? Have I hated someone in my heart? When David failed to confess his sin, he said, "my strength is dried up like an old piece of broken pottery and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. That is spiritual thirst, we need to have our quenched every day. Each day, accept Jesus invitation of forgiveness for YOUR sins. Only Jesus can quench

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your spiritual thirst for forgiveness. And when you drink deeply of his forgiveness, then keep listening to him.

Transition: Because his final word to us is full of power; power he uses to prove his authority and power to claim us as his own.

II. **A Word of Power** Every team looks up at the champion wants to know how the top team became champion. What is the secret to winning?

A. Many would say use your strength. Take advantage of what you do better than other teams. We know Jesus has it all. He can have the final word he has authority over all things. **"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."**

1. Jesus is the God-Man. He is both David's Lord and creator, his root; but he is also the Son of David as he laid aside his crown to come to earth and be our Savior. In other words, Jesus is telling us once more, lest we have any doubts that he IS our Savior; true God and true man who came to our world by the authority of his Father to pay for our sins.

B. We need to listen to his word carefully. It is a word no one can contradict. Jesus IS the first and the last, just as Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet so Jesus has the first and last word in our salvation.

1. I was dead and behold I am alive forever more.
2. I know my sheep and my sheep know me. My sheep listen to my voice and no one can snatch them out of my hand.
3. This is the power that Jesus has. Not Satan, not the most wicked person alive can take you or me away from Jesus. Nothing can separate you from the love of Jesus Christ your Lord.

- C. Listen carefully to his word of power because he is coming with all the gifts he has won for us by his blood. And his gifts are free. When Jesus says your sins are forgiven, do not think you have done something to receive his forgiveness. When Jesus says, all your sins are paid for, it means HE has paid for them. These are the gifts he brings with him, gifts he holds out freely to all. Dear friends, receive them in uncomplicated, trusting, childlike faith.

Application: Most teams that win championships score a lot of points. When Jesus won his victory it looked like he had not scored any points. It looked like he had no power at all. The truth IS Jesus was not trying to win points in this world. He won all his points by allowing Satan and death to think they had defeated him. And then, by leaving an empty grave, he left the final score **Jesus 1, Satan 0**. The empty grave proved it; the empty grave says, you share in that victory because of the promise of your God.

Transition: Behind those promises we have the power of our God—power found nowhere else in the universe, a power that he exercises for us. And his power brings us great comfort.

III. A Word of Comfort

- A. Our Savior's blood has washed us and we wear his robes of righteousness. He gives us comfort that no matter what our sin, he is so powerful he leaves no stain of sin upon us. AND we have the right to enter heaven and eat from the tree of life. No human victory can compare. No confetti shower or victory parade will do justice to our Savior's championship, except our praises and our thanks.
- B. Because he promises that he judges us by our deeds of faith done for others out of love for him. Jesus says, even giving a cup of cool water to one of his little ones is pleasing to him. So remember how important every deed of love really is. It is pleasing to Jesus.

C. That means he will protect us. And that too is comforting, for he shows us that those who would want to harm us and lead us astray cannot touch us, especially when Jesus finally calls us home to heaven. **“Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.”** The unbelievers who oppose Jesus are called “dogs” that was a word for unbeliever in OT times especially.

D. And when we think of the trials we go through in this world, then remember Jesus last words in the NT, **I am coming soon.** Find comfort in these words when it seems the enemies of Christ and his Father look like they are winning. Any victory they seem to win will have no affect on Jesus’ empty grave.

Application: Every human victory is won for self and self-glory. The victory our Savior won is for us. This is exactly why his final words are also for us. He says, “I am coming soon.” If ever there were words that we could both see and hear—these are those words. For when Jesus comes again, then we will see with our eyes and hear with our ears and we will hear him say, **“Come you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world.”** Yes, our victorious Savior has the final word. Amen.