

# “Come, Lord Jesus”

*7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Eastertide*

*Revelation 22: 12-14, 16-18, 20-21*

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From the Pulpit

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*Let us Pray: Holy God, pour out your Holy Spirit on these words that are spoken. Silence in us any voice but your own. May we hear with joy what you have for us this day. Amen.*

I know families who take a long time to say good-bye. At the end of a family function, you start in the kitchen, and begin your “good byes.” You move through the hallway to the living room, and another family member stops you to say one more thing. Uncle Bill goes on ahead to warm up the car. Thirty minutes later, you inch closer, you can almost touch the front door. Just then, the very first person you said good bye to way back in the kitchen meets you at the door again for one final good bye.

You make it out the door and your family follows you onto the front porch! It’s the most loving, “see you tomorrow” there could be.

What if a good-bye is more like an invitation or an anticipation of the next time you are in each other’s presence?

Sometimes what appears to be the end, is not the end.

Take the passage from The Revelation to John that Kim read a few moments ago. The book of Revelation is the last book in the Canon. Chapter 22 is the last chapter. Verse twenty-one is the last verse...of the entire Bible. **THE END.**

It's strange and striking how the Bible ends. Not like a mystery, with the culprit revealed and the riddle solved. Not like a symphony or a musical with a grand finale. Not like a novel, with the main character or characters finding some resolution.

The Bible ends by not ending. It ends in anticipation. It ends with the faithful still waiting, with Jesus saying, "Very soon now, I shall be with you." What kind of ending is that? In a way it seems unfair. Sixty-six books and a couple thousand years and we're still waiting?!<sup>1</sup> **It's not an end.**

Revelation may not be your favorite book of the Bible for any number of reasons. It never used to be mine, but it quickly moving up on my list! I find the book of Revelation quite **interesting as the conclusion of the Bible. It's challenging, but**

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<sup>1</sup> Tony Robinson, Congregational Northwest, UCC, Day1.org. I love this ending in anticipation and ending in invitation. Isn't it a wonderful way to think about our mission and ministry?

it's not a conclusion. It's an invitation. That's why I like it. Even with its visions and metaphors; its violence and vindictiveness; it's the encouraging reminder of a present God with God's people through difficult times.

Now, listen to what scholars tell us about the context and content of this difficult and oft-maligned book called Revelation. (This is important.)

The Book of Revelation was written at a time (late first century) when the church was undergoing fierce persecution by Rome. It was a scary time for Christians. It's written in the form of a letter from John, a Christian in exile on the island of Patmos, to Christians in seven churches in the country we now know as Turkey. It was then still part of the Roman Empire. Many Romans saw Christians as disloyal or unpatriotic because some refused to worship the emperor. Some Christians were imprisoned, tortured, or even executed.

It is difficult for us to imagine that because you are a Christian the police might knock on the door and haul you off to jail, where you might be tortured until you named the other

members of your church and then executed, thrown to wild beasts for the emperor's entertainment, or doused in oil and burned as a torch in the night.<sup>2</sup>

In the midst of such dangerous times, John uses bizarre and wild images so that the Romans won't know what he is talking about. He's writing in code. This letter of Revelation was sent not to foretell the end of time but to unveil the truth about the challenges the churches faced and about God's presence with them. John wanted to give Christians hope, help them endure, and encourage them to resist complacency and accommodation with the current religious and social practices of the empire around them. John writes to remind his frightened readers that there is light in the midst of their current darkness, that the power in the universe is not Rome with its military might, but rather with God, a God of mercy and peace and compassion and love. John reminds them that the world is not headed toward Rome, the world is headed toward God.<sup>3</sup>

The conclusion is not about the past, but it is an invitation announcing a future. This invitation is for anyone who wishes

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<sup>2</sup> Brittany Porch, Director of Mission and Education, Broad Street Presbyterian Church, 2016

<sup>3</sup> Amy Miracle, Sermon, "Where are we going" Broad Street Presbyterian Church, 2016

to come to the water of life and receive it as a gift. It's a future where the water of life is offered to everyone. It's a fountain of living water. You may recall the encounter in the Gospel of John between Jesus and the woman at the well. He recounts that water from that well will keep her thirsty, but if she drinks from the water he gives---it will be a spring gushing up to eternal life (John 4:14-18).

This is the same water we read about from the first page in the Book of Genesis to the last page of Revelation. This water is life giving water. This water is a fresh start.

In the text, the Spirit says, "Come." The Bride, says, "Come." Let everyone who hears say, "Come. Let everyone who is thirsty come" (Rev. 22:17). Come to the waters that spring forth life. Come to the source that will never go dry.

Which brings us to today's baptism. God comes to us in the waters of Baptism. God comes to claim us and make us God's own. We are refreshed in the waters. We are renewed in the waters. We are sustained in the waters that spring forth from the One who gives us living water.

We witness to the baptism of Kullen earlier this morning. We make our promises to him and his family to support him in his Christian journey of faith. We hear the words of promise of a God who comes to us and claims us and makes us whole. That promise is sure. That water is not stagnant, but alive. That water keeps flowing. It keeps watering our lives and nurturing our relationships and our communities.

**Don't we all thirst? We hear the news, we read the morning paper, and we can't escape the hard stories that are the realities of life. We thirst for a better news story at the top of the hour. We thirst for something that is deeper in the life we have now, something that meets our deepest value. Don't we all thirst? We thirst for something more. Perhaps it's a thirst for meaning and connection. We thirst to be known by someone. We thirst for what a life can be for our neighbors in this community. It's a thirst for justice.**

That which quenches our thirst is the water that keeps inviting us to dream of a world that is not ending, not one in crisis, not one without hope. That water invites us to dream of and work

for a community that is whole; where people have jobs; and jobs that pay a living wage; a community where all have enough to eat; a nation where all families are stable families so that our children can grow up; a nation that champions supportive health care for those with mental illness and victims of violence. It is a vision of a place where life leaves no one out. Where no one is left outside that city gate, or on the other side of a wall.

Come, Lord Jesus! We might say that every day. Come, Lord Jesus and come soon! Come and be present among us again. Come into our broken world and our lives once again and make all things new. Come and invite us, draw us in to the world that you can see and set it before us. The end is not the end. God is always with us. God comes to us-God comes here-God comes to where we are-God makes us whole and mends that which is broken. God is the source of the water that brings forth life.

**Come to the water...it's an invitation to life for each of us, for this community of faith, and for all.**

Hear these words from the end that is never the end:

“Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> A sermon by Rev. Charles Hoffacher, “The last page of the Bible” [www.lectionary.org](http://www.lectionary.org) sparked the thoughts of anticipation and invitation around the images of the living water.