

**“COME NOW”**

**Pastor Mike Corwin**

**TEXT:** REVELATION 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21

**GOD’S WORD:** JOHN 17:20-26

**I – NO ONE LEFT BEHIND:**

This last weekend was Memorial Day weekend. A time we set aside to honor and remember those who have given their lives for our freedom. If you got a chance to sit and flip channels over the holiday you would have noticed there were a lot of war movies on. As I watched moments of one of them there was a scene where some men were trapped behind enemy lines and the officer in charge ordered the rest of the men to leave them for dead as they couldn’t get to them.

This didn’t ring true to me because I had always heard the motto, “NO MAN LEFT BEHIND.” I did some research and found this is known as the motto of the Marines, but every branch of the military has something similar. Some form of this motto can even be found in the orders of Napoleon and the French Legionnaire.

**II – JOHN PASSAGE:**

As I looked at the scriptures for this morning I took note that they hadn’t invented it...Jesus did. Let’s look at the passage from John you just heard read a few moments ago.

Jesus was meeting with his disciples in the upper room where he shared the Passover meal with them. He talked about his betrayal and told Judas to go and do what he must do and Judas left. After he finishes the meal, what we now call The Lord’s Supper, he gives them some instructions about what’s to come and what they should do and then he goes into a time of prayer, which is recorded in the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of John. This prayer is being offered by the one who will soon give his life willingly out of love for his followers...then and now.

If you look at this prayer carefully you will come to realize though that it’s a prayer of intercession, not sacrifice. In Verses 6-19, the passage right before the one we read, Jesus was praying for his own, those who believed in and followed him. He asked God to protect them in the world when he left. He entrusted the disciples and other believers into the caring, protective hands of God.

Then in the verses we read Jesus prays for us. For all the future believers. He prays that they would be unified in purpose, community, and love. He prayed for the mission of the people and his church. That their unity would show the world God, who sent him out of love. He's praying for the unity of the church in every age.

Then he finally prays that through love for him, for God, and for each other believers would join him someday in God's new age. The new heaven and the new earth we've been talking about the last two weeks.

He's not praying for an ecumenical, organizational unity where all the branches of the modern church as we know it today come together. No, he's praying a vision of the future where God's unifying, reconciling love would reign. That living out God's love would bring that unity and someday...in some way...God's New Age.

We should yearn and strive for that reality because Jesus wants no one left behind.

### **III – TEXT:**

As I read this morning's text I can't help but worry and be upset. I do so because it tells me the day is coming when Jesus will return and those who have not found that love, have not found that unity, have not accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior, will be left behind.

I've told you the last two Sundays of how we must tear down barriers. Of how we must invite everyone to a relationship with Christ, about how anyone can be forgiven and make it to the New Jerusalem if they give their hearts to Jesus and become his follower. The part that worries and upsets me is the realization that there are those who won't. That some will willingly choose to be left behind and they will suffer the consequences for that decision. John's final conclusion is that some will be rewarded and others will be judged. That people's actions and commitments have a price.

### **Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21(NLT)**

<sup>12</sup> "Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds. <sup>13</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." <sup>14</sup> Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life.

<sup>16</sup> "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this message for the churches. I am both the source of David and the heir to his throne. I am the bright morning star." <sup>17</sup> The Spirit and the

bride say, "Come." Let anyone who hears this say, "Come." Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life.

<sup>20</sup> He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon!" Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! <sup>21</sup> May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's holy people.

Jesus himself tells us in the Gospel that he will one day return and here in his revelation to John he repeats it. But now he talks about rewards, and later about judgement. He gives us a beatitude of this last event. He says that those who have washed their robes, those who have willingly identified with him in his death and their Salvation, those who have been obedient and been a disciple –even in the face of persecution – will be rewarded. They will get to eat the fruit from the tree of life. They will live in the city of God eternally.

Then in verse 15 John says that those who are left outside the city are dogs! Added to the lists we've been making we add sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, idol worshippers, and all who love to live a lie. In other-words – those who deny the existence of Jesus, who would rather live according to the rules of the world instead of the teachings of Jesus. They will not enter the holy city but be cast into the lake of eternal fire as we read in a previous passage.

Then Jesus authenticates the book of revelation as being from Jesus. He says he sent an angel to give all this vision to John. It's a message from Jesus himself. He also makes sure we see that he is not only the one who gave life to David – the root of the blood line – but that he is a descendent of David as well. And the star reference is to remind us that he has universal sovereignty.

According to the passage the Holy Spirit and the church are both eager for Jesus and yearning for his return. But catch this. Jesus early said those who were his followers would be welcomed in the city of God and now he says that anyone who is thirsty...anyone who wants Salvation can drink from the water of life...from Jesus, and enter. And it's all free. He is calling people to hear, heed, and receive God's grace and share in the redemption of the faithful. The followers of Jesus join in the call for Jesus to return and invite the not yet followers to join them. He wants no one left behind!

And Jesus says he is coming soon and the only response the followers of Jesus can have, and the answer to verse 17 is AMEN! COME, LORD JESUS!

And John closes with a universal blessing and affirmation that celebrates and reminds us that nothing less than God's grace is required to overcome our human sinfulness and triumphantly enter God's Holy City.

#### **IV – CHOOSE:**

Everyone has a critical, life changing decision they must make. And this decision has eternal ramifications. And you are the only one who can make it.

The choice is to follow Jesus or follow the world. Following Jesus isn't always easy, there is sacrifice involved as you give him your heart and walk the path he sets out before you.

Following the world is a whole lot easier. Sometimes I think we believe if we don't do bad evil we'll make it to the Holy City. If I don't murder, rape, rob a bank, assault children or some other kind of violence, I'll be OK. But I have to tell you that following the ways of the world includes things like:

- Individualism
- Materialism
- Greed
- Corporate Crime
- Any kind of violence
- Racism
- Ageism
- Sexism
- Destruction of the environment

So, as Moses did I want to tell you today that you must choose. Life or death? Will you walk in the way of the Lord and live...or walk in the way of the world and die? I also need to tell you that you should choose today. Because we don't know when he's coming back...just that he is.

#### **V – NO ONE LEFT BEHIND:**

I tell you this because I want to leave no one behind. No man, no women, no child. I want all of you to make it to the Holy City as well as others I haven't even met yet.

**AMEN! COME, LORD JESUS!**