

## Revelation 22:20

**Introduction:** The title of this morning's message may seem very strange. I pray it will not only make sense by the end of the message, but more importantly I pray it hits us all where we are and causes us to allow God to make some necessary changes. The apostle John wrote the book of Revelation on the island of Patmos. He was exiled there by the Roman Emperor Domitian. The reason he was exiled is given in Revelation 1:9 that says, "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. John was sent to Patmos as a religious prisoner of the Roman empire. Many people are afraid to read or study the book of Revelation because it has many symbols that can be difficult to understand and the visions described are vivid they paint a terrifying picture. Yet the book of Revelation is simply an account of how Jesus Christ will triumph over the present world and the sin that is so rampant in it. Therefore, the book of Revelation should be an inspiration and a fanning of the flames for Christians because it assures us that in the end because Jesus wins, we will win. But it should also serve as a stark warning for those who continue to reject Christ that life will continue to get worse and worse and the end will be far worse than the beginning. It is at the end of this book that John writes the phrase that is serving as our text this morning (**Read the text**). After describing to John in vivid details the end of the world as we know it we see that Jesus tells John, "Surely I come quickly." John's response is "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Remember John is a religious prisoner of Rome at this time in his life. There was no such thing as three hot's and a cot or cable television, a library, the internet, or a work release program. John was under some incredibly difficult circumstances that I dare say many of us would crumble under. Yet he didn't say "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" because he wanted to escape life. Rather he utters that phrase because he was ready to be with Jesus. He had spent the better part of his life serving Christ and growing into the grace and knowledge of Jesus and now he was ready to go to the One he loved and served faithfully for so many years. What a powerful testimony John had. It is a testimony that we can all have as well. But I fear that when the church says "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" it is not because we are prepared, but rather because we are simply ready to be done with life here on earth. At the outset of this message please understand this, I am

looking forward to seeing Jesus Christ and spending eternity in heaven. Nevertheless I think there are two reasons that the church at this point should not pray “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

✠ **The Church is not complete.** Simply put there are too many lost people who are but a mere breathe away from hell. Can you think of anyone that you know of who is not saved by the grace of God? A recent study has shown that the fastest growing religion is the religion of none. The study said that 20%, that is one in five people, now do not claim any religious belief. I believe there are two reasons for this spike. The first reason is because I see us in a second age of reason. In 1794, 1795, and 1807 a man by the name of Thomas Paine wrote a pamphlet that challenged institutionalized religion (like church) and the Bible. He wrote it during a period of history known as the Enlightenment. That was a time in which people thought religion was for the weak and that within man’s knowledge and ability to learn he could reason and solve any and all problems that existed. Isn’t this what we are seeing today? Isn’t this what Paul was also talking about in Romans 1:23, “And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.” Then in Romans 1:28-32, “And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” As we saw last week in our study of Ecclesiastes, knowledge is good, but when it doesn’t lead us to Christ it is worthless. The second reason I believe we are seeing a rise in the “nones” is because the Gospel is not being shared. A Lifeway survey found that only 20% of Christians pray for non-Christians. The same survey found that only 2% of Christians share the Gospel on a regular basis. Think about that only 1 out of 5 people pray for the unsaved and 2 out of 100 people share the Gospel.

How can Christians proclaim a message of urgency while living a lifestyle of complacency? I realize that some people are not going to listen to the Gospel, but I would also submit to you that that group is in the minority. Most people will listen, but we are making the decision for them by not sharing. That is why so many of the “nones” have a distrust of organized religion and question the Bible. They know that we are to share the Gospel and they hear us say that we love all people, but they are not seeing it. How do we fix this? Acts 1:8 says, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” First of all you, yourself must be saved. One of the evidences of your salvation is a desire to share the Gospel because you know it changed your life and you want others to experience the same thing you are. I hope the missions committee will permit me a little leeway here. Acts 1:8 doesn’t only mean that we will go to another country, although it could. It also means that we will go across the street and down the street. I want to suggest this and hopefully Acts 1:8 will be a little more personal to you. Jerusalem is your family, those who are the closest to you. Judaea are your friends, those you hang out with and spend time with. Samaria can be your acquaintances, the people you know if you see them but maybe you don’t spend a lot of time with them. The uttermost part of the earth can be those people you simply don’t know but you run into at the grocery store, the bank, the ball field, or wherever. It isn’t so much where you go as the fact that you are going and telling. We must care about those who are going to hell because they are our husbands, wives, sons, daughters, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and cousins. As much as I want to see Jesus, I pray He will give us more time so that we can share with people. The second reason I don’t think the church should pray “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” right now is

✠ **The Church isn’t prepared.** Sin and scandals abound in the church. It seems like the news is filled with religious people and politicians getting caught doing something they ought not do. When you don’t see that on tv, internet, or hear it on the radio you are bombarded with false teachers teaching false doctrines and teaching a Jesus that doesn’t exist in the Bible. There is a problem when the word “hypocrite” is more synonymous with the church

than “Christ-like.” Jesus’ desire is given in Ephesians 5:25-27 which says, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” Notice Jesus expects His church to be glorious, that is that the church will be worthy of Jesus. Jesus expects the church to be spotless which means to not have a stain, defect, or impurity. The church is to be full of grace and truth. Finally it is to be holy and without blemish which means that no fault can be found in the church. This doesn’t mean that the church is sinless, but rather that it is striving for moral perfection that is worthy of God. Let’s take an honest assessment of our own lives, can we say that we are those things? If we can’t say that about our own life, then do you think the church is those things? This is not a condemnation, I realize I have a part in it as well. This is simply a plea from God to acknowledge that we need to change, we need Him. There is a reason that 2 Chronicles 7:14 starts off by saying “if My people.” It is because if there is going to be a revival in the land, if we are going to see a reverse in the downward spiral in this country, it must start with the church. The fear of God will not come upon the people outside of the church before it comes upon the people inside the church. Everyone has a choice to either choose Jesus or to reject Him, but the problem is the world isn’t seeing a distinction between them and Christians and so they feel as though they are choosing between the lesser of two evils. Matthew 5:16 tells us to shine our light before men that they may see our works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. If we are a Christian and no one’s life is being changed because of our presence, we have an immediate need for repentance. Let’s not only tell the world they have a choice, but let’s show them which is the best choice. Let’s make sure that when we pray “Even so, come, Lord Jesus not only are we ready, but we will have done what we can so others can be ready as well.