



The Sounds of Christmas (Part2)
The coming King (Psalm24)
Pastor Ted Cunningham

Today we're in Part 2, The Coming King. As I studied this week, I thought, *you know what? Maybe next year, I don't know for sure, I think Christmas is the perfect time to do an end times series.* I think we should do the book of Revelation in December, because as we celebrate the first coming of Christ, and anticipate the second coming of Christ, what a great season of waiting and hope.

I want to start it off this way today. It's my favorite Christmas Movie Quote. I would like you to finish it and I don't want to tell you anything, 10:00, but 8:15 nailed it, so not to put you at competition, but finish this for me.

The best way to spread Christmas Cheer is... Wow, excellent. Better than 8:15. I'll make note of that. Yeah... and I sing all the time and I love Christmas music. Amy said to me earlier this week... We were driving down the road listening to our Christmas play list and she goes, "You know what I love? I love that you love Christmas music as much as me."

We were at dinner years ago with friends who announced to us that they don't like Christmas music. We were astounded. We haven't spoken to them since. We can't be friends with people that don't like Christmas music. I think my love for Christmas music makes up for the disdain I have for Hallmark Christmas Movies... because I hate them with every ounce of my being. I watched one this week. It kind of felt like Hal Markie to me. Amy said it was a new movie that's out. The whole point of the movie was how this mom felt overlooked and taken advantage of by her family. Look, some of you are nodding. What's the name of the movie? *Oh, What fun.* Okay.

This lady was saying things that a mom feels at this time of year. I kept looking over at Amy, like Do you feel that? And she was like, hmm... I don't know. I love Christmas music. Not a big fan of Hallmark movies. But this is a warm and fuzzy time of year. Family and friends gather trees and tables. We want just enough snow to cover the trees, but we don't want it on our streets. And we got the playlist. And I have a play list. My playlist has grown. I love my playlist. I'm going to give you my top three songs on this playlist. So, every time we get in the car, it always starts with Rascal Flatts, I'll be home for Christmas. That's probably my top favorite Christmas song. Then the next one is Alabama singing "Another tender Tennessee Christmas. A little more obscure, and, because I pastor in Branson, number three has to be Any Williams' It's the most wonderful time of the year. And then it's all downhill from there.

But I love those three songs. I do know this. This is not the most wonderful time of year for everybody. I understand that as a pastor and as your friends, I understand that well. Some of you feel lonely, you feel forgotten, you feel left out. Some of you are not going home for Christmas. You're not welcome. The family doesn't want you there, so you won't be there.

Also, I know there are single parents. This is your first Christmas where you're going to be trying to figure out how to make the most of Christmas Eve and Christmas day with your children.

It will be your first Christmas to actually drop children off at someone's home and not be with them on Christmas morning. I get the pain of that. For many in our church family, this is your first Christmas with an empty chair. Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa, Brother, Sister, Aunt, Uncle are not here this year. And you are going to be sharing memories, sharing stories. Christmas is going to feel different this year.

We also have church family that some have told me they believe this is their last Christmas here on earth.

I want you to know in all the joy and festivity and presents and playlists this time of year, you are not forgotten. We mourn with you. Now, go with me with this illustration for just a second because it's one of my favorite things Church Swindoll would say to us as students at Dallas Seminary. He would say, "If you want to be a good pastor guys or you want to be a good leader, you want to be a good volunteer in the church, if you want to be a good church member, you need to smell like the sheep. Let that sit with you for just a

second because I'm getting the same looks I got in the first gathering. What? Smell like sheep?

Yeah, that means you're there with them. You're spending time with them. And Church family, we don't just gather on Sunday and in and out of an hour long gathering or service like we're smelling like sheep. We know the hurts and the pains and the problems and the sheep in thickets that need help this time of year and they need help out of this season. We're a church that rejoices and mourns all at the same time. And we want that for you.

This is a season of waiting, a season of hope. Wherever you are in your journey, as we gather to worship each and every week. Next week is our candlelight service. We worship a savior who still breathes life into dead people. We worship a savior who still breathes life into dead marriages and dead families. I'm going to pray that maybe this is going to be a season for you and your family where you're able to reconcile with that family member who doesn't want you home for Christmas. I think Psalm 24... if you have your Bibles, turn there or go to your tablet or phone and pull up Psalm 24. I think this is the perfect Christmas psalm for us in this series. It takes us from creation to the return of Christ.

In ten verses, from Genesis to Revelation... And the picture you are going to get is Psalm 24. In ten verses, is a victorious, triumphant king entering through the city gates to sit upon the throne and rule and reign. Now this is important because your mind, if you study this or you've been to Sight and Sound and seen David this year, your mind is going to, first and foremost, go to David, the one writing this psalm, who was victorious over the Philistines or the Moabites, retuning back to Jerusalem, going through city gates and sitting upon the throne. Your mind should go there. But where it ultimately goes for me, as I read this messianic Psalm, is Jesus going through the city gates, sitting upon the throne of David and ruling and reigning for a thousand years after the second coming of Christ. This is a ten verse Psalm of a triumphant, victorious, King. And I hope that it gives you hope this season.

Let's start with number one. ***Jesus is the creator of all and sovereign overall.*** We're going to kind of pick up where Travis left off last week, as Travis declared, Jesus is over all, He rules over absolutely everything.

**¹ The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it...**

What does that remind you of if you went to Sunday school growing up, do you want to sing a song right now? *"He's got the whole world in his hands."*

**² for he founded it on the seas
and established it on the waters.**

I love Psalm 2 and Travis really hit on it. When you look at Psalm 2: 2,3, you have nations rebelling against God, nations saying we don't need to be ruled over by God. Too bad! It's all his. And he is over all. How does this play out for us?

Colossians 1: 15-17 continues this idea. ***The son, Jesus, is the image of the invisible God. The, first born over all creation. For in him, all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.***

This is why I don't ever stress over who is president of the United States of America. Because he is sovereign over all. All things have been created through him and for him.

So, applying this personally to you, you were created on purpose and for a purpose. Your life is not your own. You were created and designed on purpose. He is before all things and in him, all things hold together. So, he's the creator and sustainer of all life. Take a big deep breath right now. That's because of him. He allows you to take that breath.

So, a couple of points of application from these first two verses:

You were created on purpose for a purpose.

Your life is not your own. Everything you own is his.

Here's what this means, believer in "Christ Jesus. You own nothing. Everything you have, you are a steward of, you're a manager. How well are you stewarding or managing what God has placed in your hands. Have you ever heard it said, "Well appreciate that one day to give, I appreciate the encouragement to be generous, but I only make this much, but, man, if I start making more money, I'm going to be super generous.

I hate to break it to you, no, you won't. If you're not generous with a little bit, you won't be generous with more. To quote theologian Dave Ramsey, "Money just makes you more of what you already are. If you're generous, more money will make you more generous.

If you're greedy, more money ain't going to help you, it's going to hurt you. Some say, "If I hit the lottery..." Have you seen what happens to lottery winners. They don't know what to do with it.

Your resources, your talents, your gifts, they are all to be leveraged to the benefit and blessing of other people. You're created on purpose for a purpose. God has created you for a purpose, so live out his purposes. Be a steward. Be a manager.

The second big idea that comes in the next four verses of Psalm 24 is that Jesus is our victorious savior.

This thought goes so deep in these next four verses. I appreciate Nadia reading it as part of worship today.

³ Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?

Who may stand in his holy place?

Who can come before God almighty?

Verse 4 answers it.

⁴ The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,

who does not trust in an idol

or swear by a false God.

A forgiven sinner, that's who can come before God. Someone who has been forgiven. Because as we walk in this forgiveness, which is clean hands and a pure heart. Given to us by the Lord Jesus. When you are saved, when you place faith alone in "Christ alone, when you repent of your sins and stop living for yourself and going your way and you turn and follow Jesus and place faith alone in Christ alone, you are declared righteous. And biblically speaking, a forgiven sinner is righteous. When you see clean hands, pure heart, it's not speaking here of a sinless person. It doesn't mean someone who is sinless, it means someone who is righteous. And how are you made righteous? You are made righteous by Jesus. He declares you Righteousness.

So, when a believer sins, we know it. When a believer sins, we confess it. When a believer sins, we trust and know that the gospel will do what it does. We should be broken by our sin and walk in this forgiveness of clean hands and pure heart given to us by the Lord Jesus.

**⁵ They will receive blessing from the Lord
and vindication from God their Savior.**

**⁶ Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek your face, God of Jacob.**

When we use this term *Gospel*, one of the best illustrations I've ever read comes from old time preacher, theologian Martin Lloyd Jones. He says "when a king went to war and lost, he would immediately send generals throughout the cities and villages to prepare the common people for war, because the battle had been lost. The enemy would advance, take people captive. And if anyone wanted to live, they would need to fight for their lives. They would need to take their lives in their own hands. Their livelihood, their hope, their future... It was all on them. And these generals were saying in the cities and the villages, "Get ready, the enemy is coming."

On the other hand, Pastor Lloyd Jones says, "When a King won a great victory on the front lines, he would send good news messengers. He would send gospel proclaimers, literally evangelists, to the cities and the towns to proclaim victory throughout those cities of the empire these men were not generals telling people to prepare for battle. Rather, they were messengers carrying a gospel message that the livelihood, home and future of the people had been fully secured on their behalf by the King. They, themselves, had nothing to do with it".

He said, in ever religion... every religion sends out generals. In other words, every religions is a system of belief and practice that promises eternal blessing, Nirvana, enlightenment, to the degree that you are willing to believe, obey, and perform, you can have all of this. In religion, you've been given a set of instructions, a list of practices, a methodology to reform to and it's up to you to make it happen. Your life is in your hands.

But that is not what we believe, church. We believe in gospel Christianity. And gospel Christianity sends messengers, evangelists who proclaim that the victory has already been won by the King on their behalf. He is victorious. Though the people themselves have not gone to battle, they reap the rewards of the King's risk, courage, and skill.

I know we grew up In Sunday school singing, *I'm in the Lords Army and flying over the enemy, shooting the artillery*. And many of you want to be generals, but what you need to become is a messenger that the battle has been won and we have a victorious King. Get the Word out. Go tell it on the mountain. Over the hills and everywhere.

We live in a day where everybody wants to be a General in the Lord's army and we need more evangelists. We need more messengers saying we are operating, believer in "Christ Jesus, from victory, not from Hoping to win the next battle. Gospel Christianity is not advice, information, or a set of practices or doctrines that you need to adhere to in order to earn eternal life. Gospel Christianity is the announcement of a victory won on your behalf by King Jesus. All you need to do is receive, believe, and celebrate.

There are some words in scripture that Jesus gives us that strikes fear into the heart of a believer. I want to tell you that it shouldn't. Notice I said from the heart of a believer. I've had people ask me... Ted, I fear that one day I will stand before the Lord and he might say to me, "Depart from me, you worker of inequity, I never knew you." You have ding-a-ling influencers out there. I've been using *ding-a-ling* all week. Sometimes a word pops in my head... They are saying some of you are going to serve the Lord you're whole life and stand before him and he's going to cast you out. Know what Jesus is saying in that text. Speaking to Pharisees, people who were relying on their works for salvation, people who wanted their good works to bring them into a right relationship with God. That's not how it works at all. They are going to stand before him saying, "We've done all these great things in your name, and he says, "Depart from me you were counting on that and guess what? That was the overflow of your salvation." "If you would have received me, not the source of it."

So, let me ask you, do you believe Jesus is the son of God? Do you believe that he lived a sinless life and went to the cross and died for your sins and for mine? Have you trusted him as your savior. Have you repented of your sins? Do you believe Jesus rose from the dead? Listen, salvation is not a secret, it's a gift. To be received, to be believed. Now, believer in "Christ Jesus, when you do good works, it is the overflow of your salvation, not something you're counting on for it.

So, at your funeral, I'm not going to stand up and proclaim all the good things you've done, almost like a resume to show why you should get in. That's not what I'm going to say at all. I'm going to say this person trusted in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation and he is a victorious savior. We can't say this enough at this church. gospel Christianity is the announcement of a victory won on your behalf by King Jesus, which you have only to receive, believe, and celebrate. Then here we go. We've moved into number 3.

When you get to these last four verses, what is David speaking of? Jesus is the King of glory. He will soon return to rule and reign again from the throne of David in Jerusalem

for a thousand years. We here at woodland hills Family Church believe in the second coming of Christ. He is going to literally return the second time just as he did the first time. That's why I think, in this season, I hope, as we celebrate the first coming of Christ, you are longing for the second coming of Christ. I do. I long for it every single day. "Lord, please come before this two o'clock meeting that would be awesome." *Lift up your heads, you gates;*

Are you longing for the return of Christ? Christians, let this fill you with hope. We need to encourage one another that the Lord will return soon, and we need to warn others we need to mourn the loss and we need to encourage one another with this good news. Some of you turn on the news and get too worked up if I'm being really honest with you.

I turn on the news and I look at some ding-a-ling politician running his mouth or running her mouth and sometimes I'll even point at the screen and go "One day, that person will bow their knee to King Jesus. One day, all this nonsense going on... I'm not the ultimate end in all of this, but Jesus is. And this is why we should be celebrating the return of "Christ.

Verses 7 - 10

**be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.**

**⁸Who is this King of glory? He is the Lord Almighty
The Lord strong and mighty, He is the king of glory.**

**So,
the Lord mighty in battle.**

**⁹Lift up your heads, you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.**

**¹⁰Who is he, this King of glory?
The Lord Almighty—
he is the King of glory.**

Pretty much for every message, I put a playlist together and there are times that Amy is like I'm good with that one... we can move on to another one.

This week, at the top of my playlist, was the Gaithers singing The King is Coming. Look it up. Put it on your phone. I'm not going to sing it for you... Maybe I should.

I'm going to read it. This will fire you up and it needs to be a powerhouse tenor doing it. So, that's why I ain't doing it. I can hear the chariots rumble, I can see the marching throng. The flurry of God's trumpets spell the end of sin and wrong. That's worth celebrating. Regal robes are now unfolding heaven's grandstand all in place. Heaven's choir is now assembled, start to sing Amazing Grace. Oh, the King is coming, the King is coming. I just heard the trumpet sounding. And now, his face I see, Oh the King is coming, the king is coming. Praise God. He is coming for me. The King is returning.

God sent the Angel Gabriel to Marry. We read this in Luke 1: 30-33. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great. He will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his Father David. And he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever. His kingdom will never end.

In this season of celebrating the first coming of Christ, let us, followers of Jesus, long for the second coming. Long for the return of the Lord.

Dr. Charles Stanley says the first coming of Christ was essentially an infiltration of humanity. There was no big noise for the whole world to hear or other demonstration that God had taken on flesh. Jesus just snuck into the human experience, being born as a human baby. There were some supernatural accompaniments. The angels announced his birth to the shepherds, the star of the Magi followed, and the voice of God to the Magi. All in all, the savior's birth was a pretty quiet affair. But it's not going to be that way with the second coming.

John Walburg from Dallas Seminary wrote multiple books on Revelation and end times. He says, "In contrast to his lowly birth in Bethlehem, where he was laid in a manger, this advent, the Second Coming of Christ, is the triumphant King of Kings and Lord of Lords coming to claim the world for which he died and over which he is now going to exercise his sovereign authority in absolute power. This is the Second Coming of Christ.

When you think about the second coming of Christ, there are 1,845 references to it in the Old Testament. Far more than even in the New Testament. The New Testament has 318 references to the Second Coming of Christ.

Twenty three of the twenty seven New Testament books refer to the second Coming of Christ. Jesus referred to his second coming 21 times. When we think about the birth of Jesus, the first coming of Christ and we think about the second coming of Christ, the

second coming references outnumber the first coming references 8 to 1. He is returning, friends. Read your Bible, it is clear as can be.

Dr. David Jerimia said, "In his first Coming, he was a suffering servant who sympathize with our weaknesses

In the second coming, he will be a powerful warrior and King who will defend his people and forever destroy evil. Remember that when you watch Fox News this week. That's not how it ends. It ends with Jesus returning to this earth. Whatever you're reading, whatever you're listening to, whoever you're listening to, whoever is influencing you, Chuck Swindoll said, "Critics have denied, speaking of the second coming, lyrics have laughed at it, scholars have ignored it, Liberal theologians have explained it away, fanatics have caused many to shrug it off. The return of our Savior will continue to be attacked, ignored, and denied, but there it stands. Solid as a stone. Soon to be fulfilled. Offering us hope and encouragement amidst despair and unbelief."

We are living in a time... I feel like every week, we are debating a major doctrine of the Church. I'm grateful for elders. We don't sit around at elder meetings going, "Today, we are going to discuss weather or not we still believe this major doctrine." If an elder ever brings that up, that they want to change one of the major doctrines, that would be there last meeting as an elder.

Don't get your theology from Tucker Carlson or the guy who sings *Save a horse, Ride a cowboy*. That started a couple of years ago with everybody debating the second coming of Christ. And I'm just sitting there going why? Then we started debating started debating Israel. I still follow clearly along with Genesis 12 and believe those who bless Israel will be blessed and those who curse Israel will be cursed.

So, we still believe, support, I stand with Israel.

Read your bible to see how they behaved throughout a lot of history. All I know is I'm called to do what the Bible tells me to do. And this week, the doctrine was hell. If you're curious about what the debate is, we believe in eternal conscious torment. We believe Hell is a place where those who go there will suffer torment for all of eternity. I'm boiling this down. This isn't a message on Hell. Although every Christmas needs a good message on hell.

But one influencer who, many of you have listened to, many of you have followed, many of you really like this guy. He's not kind of going down the path of annihilationism, believing it fits more with the character of God that you'll be snuffed out and will not suffer for all of eternity.

Let me ask you, who wants you to believe that? Do you think Satan, the father of all lies, wants you to believe that Hell won't be that bad? You may suffer for just a little bit, but then you'll be snuffed out and gone. This is heresy. So, we keep debating these doctrines and I just want to encourage you, follower of Jesus, don't be so open minded that your brain falls out. If you've been listening to a ding-a-ling, stop listening to a ding-a-ling. Stick with what you've been taught and what you believe.

Jesus said, in Revelation 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, yes, I am coming soon and we are to long for his return. Amen... Come Lord Jesus.

Let me end by asking this question. Some of you were asking this week online. I see this quite a bit. The question is, "If you knew the Lord was returning this week, what would you do Tomorrow morning. I was hoping to get a Thessalonian answer. Many Thessalonians live as though he was returning like... they believed his return was so eminent that working was pointless. Go into work. That doesn't make sense I would never see that check. What if there's more purpose to our work than just money?

We don't have to guess about this because we're given clear instruction on what we should do as we wait for the return of the Lord.

There were many Thessalonians who believed that the second coming had already taken place. There were many who believed that it was so eminent they quit their jobs. They became idle. Ask any parent in here. What happens when someone or your child becomes idle? They get in trouble. And that's what happened. Many of the Thessalonians became idle and they started meddling in other peoples' business. They became Karens. They were that HOA person checking on the lawn and all that. Too much going on. They were idle, they were meddling, and because they weren't making any money, they were dependent on other people to take care of them because they thought the Lord was going to return, I'm not going to work.

That puts into context 1 Thessalonians 4 :11-12. Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life as you wait for the Lord to return. You should mind your own business and God's people said... Amen. When you get up every day and go to work and when you take care of your

family, you ain't got time to worry about what's happening with the neighbor's lawn. Every time you see someone online that's a meddler or a busy body, you're like go be productive. Get something done with your life. We don't like you. You are too much. *Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house. Too much of you and they will hate you.* He says mind your own business and work with your hands. We should get up tomorrow and go to work. When the Lord returns, you should be found working. The seniors are going "wait a second..."

If you are a follower of Jesus, you should be found serving the Lord when he shows up. You should be busy serving the Lord. Live a quiet life, mind your own business, work with your hands, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders. Let people see you working. And you will not be dependent on anybody. You will be providing for yourself and for your family.

Clear instruction on what we should do in the season of waiting: Live a quiet life, mind your own business, and get a job. Get to work.

Father, in the name of Jesus, I thank you for the generosity of this church and thank you for those who will be fed this christmas season and beyond. I thank you for a church that takes seriously the responsibility we have to be the church and to rejoice in this season with those who are rejoicing with those who are mourning. I pray for the families right now that are hurting. I think of the family of Carmin today and just ask that you comfort them during this very very difficult time. This church family mourns with them.

For the one who has never placed faith in Jesus that today would be the day they repent of their sins, confess with their mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in their heart that he has been raised from the dead that they would no longer be relying on their good works for salvation, but they would trust no other name by the name of Jesus for their salvation. And everyone who calls upon the name of Jesus will be saved. That today would be the day of their salvation.

We pray this in the authority of the name of Jesus, and everyone agreed and said... Amen