



The Creed

Part 4 – I Believe Jesus is Coming Again

Pastor Ted Cunningham

We're continuing in a series called *The Creed*. We're looking at what we believe. Today, we finish what's called the timeline piece of The Creed. We've been looking at events. Today is a little bit different because we'll look at three lines of The Creed and we'll actually see past, present, and future in these three lines. We've been declaring what we believe based on what happened. Today, we're actually going to be declaring what we believe about something that has not yet happened.

I went with a title that as soon as I started studying for this last Sunday, brought a hymn back to my mind from my childhood. I am just shocked at myself that I have retained all of these hymns from childhood. That's why we're doing *The Creed*, and many of you, you got The Creed. But, I can get one line of a hymn in my brain and sing like every single verse... Well, not all the verses; we never sang the third verse, but I can sing the first, second, and fourth verse of all these songs. Raise your hand if that's still you.

How many of you remember, "Coming again, coming again..."? Finish it for me. "May be morning may be noon. May be evening and may be soon." Sorry that we excluded the rest of you Catholics and Presbyterian, but that was a Baptist hymn. We sang, "He is coming again. It may be morning, it may be noon. May be evening," but I can guarantee you it's very soon. We would sing this! We sang it with power. And then that led me into *Blessed Assurance*.

What I've loved about this series are the responses that we're getting. When we put this series together, we had no idea the chords that it would strike. And it's different chords for different people. Some of you are the G chord and some of you are the C chord and some of you are D and some of you are A and some of you are F minor, but we're not even going to get into that. We've had so much response to this with emails and messages and just on the street. "Hey, I'm loving this series!" Or "Hey, can I talk to you about this series?"

Let's just throw a couple of them up. Some of you are having a lot of **fun** with the series. I'm not going to call him out, but Dr. Matt... This week, I went into the office and he goes, "Hey, how are we doing in our Catholic church over there? I love that you're having fun with it.

So, some... For many... I love these messages. I wish I could read some of them. For many of you, it's **fond memories**. You're like, "Boy, I haven't recited this forever and, Ted, I've believed what we're talking about for 30 years of my life and it's good to be reminded of it.

There are just sweet letters coming in from people saying, "I'm going to start teaching this to my kids so they have the whole counsel of God's Word. I want them to have a start to finish theology and something they can recite when asked."

For others, this series is causing some **frustration**. We're okay with that. Not that we're trying to rub it in on you. That's not at all what we're trying to do. For some, the frustration... You're asking, "How long are we going to be reciting The Creed; is this a new thing in our church?" Some of you grew up singing that hymn, *Coming Again*, and you were in the type of church that said, "No creed but the Bible." I want to remind you on that. We're using the Apostles' Creed as an outline, but we're going to the scripture to teach the theology and what we are to believe and what we are to live out of it.

Some of you are frustrated with it because you were really... I want to say this well. You haven't been taught well. I was going to say it's ignorance, but that seemed strong, so I didn't want to use that word. But, some of you really haven't been taught well with this. And if I can just this one... I'm not going to call out anybody, but some of you are part of pretty new denominations. You've come here from denominations that aren't that old. I just want to encourage you. You can be mad at me right now and we're okay with that, but don't make this about me or what this church is doing right now in a series. This is you and the Lord as we go through this.

This is what I always loved about Pat Kershaw. Where is Pat Kershaw. I get nervous when I don't see her in the first service. Has somebody called her. Is she okay. Somebody call her and make sure she's with us. I mean upon this earth. That's what I'm asking, Scott. She usually tells me when she's not going to be here and she doesn't have Life Alert.

Do you know what I love about Pat? Pat has been a Christian for 70 years and she's read the Bible longer than I've been alive. She's studied the Bible longer than I have been alive. But, what I love about Pat is she said, "When you share something, I'm always sitting there praying, 'Lord, let me learn something.'" She's in her 80s and still asking God to teach her something. That should be the posture of all of us.

One of the things we love about this church with the new believers here... We love having new believers among us. The reason is you help keep us from becoming jaded. When you've been in the faith for a while or you've been in the church for a while... People get burned out on church. People can become old and crusty. Let me say it again, 9:00am, they can become old and crusty. It's why they need children in their life. It's why they need grandchildren in their lives. They need to be reminded of all the excitement and all the questions. Children ask great questions. Sometimes way too many question, but they ask great questions. As we get old and as we think we've learned enough in the faith and we don't have to go any further, I just ask that you open your heart to this.

If you're coming from what I would call a modern denomination... So, for some of you in the Baptist Church, you heard "no creed but the Bible" and that's modern Baptists. Historic Baptists did The Creed. Some of you think Paul was a Baptist. No, he was not. I know you read that in a book somewhere.

For some of you, your denomination is 100 years old. I would just caution you to pause and think for a moment. I was always trained in seminary that if I pick up the Bible and read a passage this week, surrounded by commentaries, and I read something and I get a new revelation or a new interpretation from this passage, my professors told me, "Rest assured you don't, you're wrong." They would say, "If you found something new that all of these other people never discovered, you're probably living in arrogance, Ted." I would just say be careful if you think that someone in your denomination discovered something in the last 100 years that the other 1,900 years never discovered; you're on very, very shaky ground.

How's Pat? Is she good? We're working on it. We'll let you know by the end of the service where Pat Kershaw is; okay. But, just be at peace with this because we are a church driven by the scripture and the authority of God's word.

For others... This is a big one. It's a **foundation**. You're brand new in the faith and this is not bringing you along and you want to be able to share in a concise statement, which is what The Creed is. It's a concise statement of our essential beliefs. So, if you're joining us for this series, here's what we're saying: **It is good that you believe**. But, we don't want anyone to stay there saying, "I believe in God. I believe in Jesus." That's good, but we don't want you stay there.

It is better that you know what you believe, that you are able to communicate what you believe about God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. "This is what I believe about Jesus. This is what I believe about the Holy Spirit." Going back to that frustration piece here, "This is what I believe about the Holy Catholic Church." We're going to talk about that next week, so if you've been really worn out and not reciting that part when we get to it, we'll explain that clearly. There's a difference between the Universal Church and the Universalist Church. The Universal Church are all believers. We are a local church, part of the capital C church. The Universal Church.

A Universalist Church... They have them up in Springfield. A Universalist Church is a church that believes nothing. You're like, "That's not true. They are really solid on the fact that they don't hold any deep truths." Yeah, but everything is just a free for all. You believe what you want to believe, I believe what I want to believe. We call that relativism. I'm just going off on a lot of stuff I never planned on talking about this morning. But, we want you to move from saying I believe to what you believe, but we don't even want you to stay there.

It is best that you live what you believe. That it's part of you. And we believe this. Above all else, guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life. Meaning every word you speak and every action you take flows from your heart. So, you are going to live out what these deep truths are.

Today, we are looking at this part of The Creed: **He ascended to heaven... And sits on the right hand of the Father Almighty... From whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead**. Let's leave this up here for a second because this is the past, present, and future. This is something that has happened. after the resurrection, he ascended to heaven. And currently, right now, present tense, he sits on the right hand of the Father Almighty.

And this is where we are going to spend most of the time today. We actually made this decision last night. I haven't even shared it with the teaching team yet. But, studying for this... This has been a very difficult week because I spend more time trimming out. There is so much to discuss and explain on this last one. **From whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.**

Today, we are looking at something that we say we believe that hasn't happened yet, but we're also talking about something that a lot of people don't like to discuss and that's judgment. If there's one thing Christians love to say in the church, it is this statement: "Don't judge me." We're told, in Matthew 7, "Don't judge your brother." But, we've kind of taken that to mean that Jesus doesn't judge us. We're going to hear clearly today that Jesus will come again one day to judge. On his first coming, Jesus came to be our savior. On the second coming, he will come to be the judge and he will judge the living and the dead.

We've never done a Halloween series, but we are going to do a Halloween series for the month of October and the series is simply called *The Living and the Dead*. I asked my daughter, "Do you think that something you young folks will be intrigued with because isn't there a show called the Living Dead?"

She goes, "Dad, it's The Walking Dead."

But, we are a culture obsessed with the dead right now. Well, let's spend a month with it. We're just going to pick you right up in your spirits, so a whole month on the living and the dead, leading you right into Halloween.

I went to Universal Studios with my son last weekend for one day. We got there early so we could do five rides in the first hour. I'm getting older... And let me tell you, all the rides are the same. They are simulator rides with a different storyline. So, you just sit there and bounce up and down, go from side to side, tilt up and down, and you've got 3D glasses on.

I've told you I pass out all the time. I didn't pass out, but after about an hour, I'm like a thermometer; I just feel it rising up in my soul and into my throat. I go, "Carson, I can't do five rides an hour." He can see the paleness coming over me and the dark under my eyes. I said, "There's also something else that we're working with." And this is really how I stood in the line most of the time: wavering from side to side, kind of weak in the knees. I'm there for my son.

It's a great teachable moment because I told Carson, "Carson, I don't know if you know it, but almost every ride we've been on has been about death. The Mummy, that's about death. You don't know, are they dead or are they alive? You can't figure that out. Then we went to the Transformers ride. Same ride, different screens. Same glasses, same ride. Then we went over to Harry Potter and it was death, death, death. It's all death and ghosts and people who are somewhat dead or alive; you don't know.

I said, "Carson, I'm a little concerned about your soul right now that we're watching all these things about dead people. I don't know for sure if this... I don't feel good as a dad right now taking you on all these death rides."

I love what my son said to me. He goes, "Dad, you know I believe in Jesus."

And I said, "That's good. Let's talk about that the whole time between these dead rides because I'm about there. I think that's the whole point of what they're wanting you to do with this show."

So, what we've done... If you didn't grab one of these little signs on the way in, they'll be available for you on the way out. We want you to be able to follow The Creed with this so you can teach your kids with this. We love the pictures. If you ever want to know how some speakers memorize so much stuff... Like Joe White. How does he memorize all that stuff and just pages of memorization? The key is pictures. If you want to memorize an outline, for anybody that teaches or speaks, etc., you just put little pictures with it and it helps you remember it. We want you to see that up to this point in The Creed, we've been going through a time line. We've been looking at events.

Starting next week, we are going to get into the bigger topics: The Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, communion of Saints, forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and the life everlasting. But, up to this point, we've been looking at stuff that has happened. So, you can go through this with your kids. I encourage you to write all over it, but use it this week as devotional time. We're always trying to find ways for families to engage with what you're learning in here to teach your kids. Remember, Mom and Dad, you are the primary voice to your child's heart. You're the primary author of your child's heart, so we want you to do this.

So, it's I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit. He was born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilot (that is a whip). He was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. He rose again on the third day. He ascended to heaven. He sits at the right hand of the Father Almighty. How many of you are actually impressed? Cory did a right hand there. I thought that was super impressive right there. From whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. And those are the three parts we want to look at today. And the simple outline is this: Jesus went to the Father, he is right now with the Father, and he will one day be sent back by the Father.

Jesus went to the Father. (He ascended to heaven)

This is Acts 1. ***6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"*** The kingdom needs to be reestablished and reset up. In just a second, we're going to talk of the Millennial Kingdom and the judgment that takes place at the beginning of that. We won't be looking today at the Great White Throne of Judgment, which takes place at the end of the Millennial Kingdom.

This is the interaction Jesus has with them. ***7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority."*** So, what we're talking about today is what's going to happen in the future. This is where we start clearly with our theology. We don't know when it is going to happen. I am utterly shocked every time a pastor or someone who has earned credibility in ministry over the years comes up with a date. I don't understand. They don't have a board; they definitely aren't led by elders because if I did that, the elders would say, "You've lost your dang mind!" The one thing we

know is we don't know. So, today, don't get obsessed with timelines. I gave you one, but don't get obsessed with the end times timeline. Don't get obsessed with when it's going to happen.

We all sat there on Monday with the eclipse. I bent down to get my camera... It was just about to happen. I thought they were off on the time because... We were on a boat and I had the lights on because it was going to get pitch black, right? We were going to need the lights. So, I thought I had plenty of time. "They're off a little bit on the time, Carson, because it's still very bright out here right now."

Then I go down to get my camera and I hear Carson go, "Yep. It's over. It just happened."

What!? And it was on the other side. I go, "I can't believe I missed it."

But, we were all looking into the sky on Monday. The little things I started to get relating the eclipse to the apocalypse... Run from any teacher or church that starts to give you a date. If this church were ever to do it, I'll be running ahead of you. That is for the Father to know. He has said it is set by his own authority.

8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this text because this is where we are going to pick up next week with I Believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church. We are going to look at our pneumatology, which is the study of the Holy Spirit. We're going to look at ecclesiology, which is the study of the church.

9 "After he said this, he was taken up (ascended) before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight."

We read this is Mark 16. **15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."** This is the action, this is the work we are to be doing while Jesus is with the Father. Again, we are going to look at this again in more detail next week. We're just establishing the order of the events this morning. **19 After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them...** After he had commanded them to go into all the world and preach the gospel and had given them the assignment that we are to be doing while he is with the Father, **...he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.** So, that takes us from Jesus ascended... We'll look at more of this next week.

Jesus is with the Father.

So, he's with the Father and the questions would be "What is he doing? What is the plan right now? What's taking place since the ascension and this time sitting at the right hand of the Father?"

In Romans 8, we read, **34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that... As Travis spoke about last week. ...who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.** He is there right now on your behalf, follower of Jesus, interceding for you to the Father. But even more than that. Let's keep reading. What is he doing with the Father?

This is **anticipation**. We told you that every week, we want to give your practical application. What do we do with this theology? We don't just want to state what we believe, but we want to know what to do with it. What we're talking about today should create in you great anticipation, excitement. You should be overjoyed with the work that you get to do in the short period of time you have upon this earth because you, one day, follower of Jesus, will be joining Jesus and the Father.

It's super important to understand that the anticipation builds in us is not fear based. We shouldn't fear. I probably started teaching my son, who is 12 now, end times theology too early in life. On Monday, we were having those conversations and he said there were times he had a hard time sleeping years and years ago because we talked so much about the Lord's return. We talk about death in our home because we don't fear death. We're not asking for it today, but we don't fear it. Monday, Carson and I had more of the conversations. There was just a little bit of anxiety and I said, "Son, we are to be living daily, hourly, as we just sang, :Coming again, may be morning, may be noon, may be evening, may be soon." That is a daily perspective of the Lord's return. It's a daily perspective of how we are living with great hope and great anticipation.

We say we believe it; do we live it? Do we have this anticipation? Jesus actually said to them in John 14, **1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me."** Know the plan, know what's taking place. He's with the Father. **2 "My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going."** So, he is with the Father, he's preparing a place for us, he's interceding for us, but he is returning one day for us.

That's that final arrow. He is coming again to judge the living and the dead. That arrow represents the second coming not the rapture of the church. We'll get there in just a moment.

Jesus will be sent back by the Father.

If you have your Bibles, I really want to encourage you that this would be one to mark up. We're going to spend a lot of time in Matthew 24 and Matthew 25 in October.

I want you to turn to Matthew 25 and we're going to pick it up in Verse 31 as we look at this final judgment, as we look at the judgment when Jesus returns, the Son of Man appears. I love that term. You read throughout the New Testament of the appearing of the Lord. He came the first time to be our Savior. He didn't come as a politician, he didn't come as a judge. And, as we talk about this, all of us think about standing in front of the judge.

I told you the story earlier this summer of getting pulled over by the State Troopers on Table Rock Lake. I got a \$137.00 for not having a throwable life square, or whatever the thing is that they want you to have. I was frustrated by it. I sent my \$137.00 in with great joy in my heart to make sure they knew I was good with following the laws. Then they sent me a letter back saying I forgot the processing and handling fee of \$6.00.

Then y'all were so kind. Everybody was handing me these books called *The Handbook of Missouri Boating Laws and Responsibilities*. I got six of them that next couple of weeks and discovered it is far easier to get in the Kingdom of Heaven than it is to boat on Table Rock Lake, I can tell you that. So, I've really been enjoying my time there.

We don't like talking about judgment because it's right and wrong, black and white, and it is set; it is guilt and it is innocence. But, can I tell you when we talk about judgment today, it's even more than that; it's life and death. **31** ***"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne."*** We believe there will be a literal, physical kingdom set up on this earth for 1,000 years – we call it the Millennial Kingdom – where Jesus will rule and reign on the throne. This judgment we are looking at is not at the end of the Millennial Kingdom, which is the Great White Throne judgment, the judgment upon wicked. This is at the beginning of this millennial reign.

32 ***"All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."*** In that day, as this parable is being told, it was very common that sheep and goats would graze together, but then when they would come in, you would have to separate them for shearing. Some would separate them for going down at night. Now, Jesus is using this as an illustration, saying I will be doing this, I will be separating the sheep from the goats. **33** ***"He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left."***

34 ***"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance...'"*** Your inheritance being eternal life. I want to be very clear here as we look at the fruit of our salvation, not the source of it as this text continues. ***"...the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."***

37 ***"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"***

40 ***"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine...'"*** Some believe these would be the Gentiles that were taking care of the Jews during the time of tribulation, which is the seven years before the Millennial Kingdom, before the Second Coming and we're going to continue with that theology in just a second. ***"...you did for me."***

41 ***"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me."***

44 ***"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?"***

45 "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'"

Now, when you first read this, you're thinking this is service; Jesus is referring clearly here that you get into the kingdom by serving people and by caring for people, by providing for people, but Jesus separates them and says to them, "You now receive your inheritance" and here's how we separate true believers from those who are pretending and those who are not believers. He's saying it's seen in your deeds. Your faith should produce action. Your action does not save you. Your action is an overflow of your salvation.

This is very confusing for many, but faith alone in Christ alone. We just sang about it. You will stand before God, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus. We don't pick these songs at random. We don't just flippantly throw them up there. We believe that when we sing it. We stand before God justified, declared righteous, not because we help the sick, not because we fed the hungry, not because we welcomed in a stranger. That is all the overflow of our salvation and it is the testimony of what Jesus has done in and through us. The sheep and the goats will be separated. The sheep are those who have placed faith in Jesus and now it has been made evident in their life because they now serve.

There are some in here... This just crushes me. I hear it all the time. "When my husband gets there before I do, I hope he puts in a good word for me." It's terrible theology. It's not good theology. He's not there to put a word in... His word doesn't blot your name in or out of the Book of Life. His word is not what determines you standing rightly before God.

You're like, "When I get there, I hope the good Lord lets me in because I've done a lot of good stuff." Your works are like filthy rags. It's claiming the name of Jesus, faith in Jesus. I could give you twenty things I've heard in this town from people... they're holding onto it for their salvation. And every time I hear it, I'm getting to the point where I don't even say a lot. I just go, "Wrong!" I say that because I love you and you've been taught that or you believe that or that's in your soul and it's wrong. You stand before will him, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus. He is the one that you have placed faith in and it is made evident in what you do. At the end of this, Jesus will say this. **46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."**

In here today, there are many... I'm going to say the majority will go away to eternal life, but there are many in here today... I just want you to hear this clearly and this comes from a church that loves you and a pastor that cares for you. You have not placed faith in Jesus... You've done a lot of great service activities around this town. Any time a volunteer opportunity presents itself, you take action and you go after it, but you've never placed faith in Jesus. I just want you to know that you stand today condemned before God. You stand today lost. And you stand today one that at this judgment, if you have not place faith in Jesus, you will go away to eternal punishment, clearly. A place we believe is a real place called hell, where torment is forever. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe that actually, before this judgment, before the Millennial Kingdom, the church is raptured out. Here's where I don't want us getting into debates because there are some in here that believe the rapture of the church will take place just moments before the Second Coming. That view is called post-

tribulationism, meaning we will go through the tribulation and then be raptured out. I am what you would call and I believe theologically in the pre-tribulation rapture. I believe seven years before the Millennial Kingdom is established upon this earth, the church, the bride of Christ will be raptured out.

I believe you read about this in 1 Thessalonians 4 and this moves us from anticipation to **exhortation**. As we speak in such heavy terms today, believer in Christ Jesus, you should be encouraging one another with this. This is our great hope. **16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.** To meet those who are still living upon the earth. **17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.** And all God's people said... Amen.

What do you do with this theology? If this is what we say believe, this is how we live it. It's best that we live this. The scripture says, **18 Therefore encourage** (debate) **one another with these words.** Follower of Jesus who loves the timelines... I love the timelines. I love talking about end times, but when we talk about end times, may the very first thing upon your lips be exhortation, not argumentation. Is that a word? I just made that word up. Not conflict, not frustration. We should all be living with great anticipation because the one who sits at the right hand of the Father will come again one day to judge the living and the dead. And we should take this so seriously. We should be anticipating this and we should be encouraging one another. The word exhortation is not just encouragement. It is encouragement; it's a synonym often used for encouragement, but it's an encouragement that prompts people to action. That's exhortation.

With what I do for a living, I'm constantly getting feedback. You do events and get these surveys back with what everybody thought about everything you said and every joke that was made. It's very uplifting. Think about you Branson entertainers, like after every show if every person filled out a comment card and survey and 95% of them love you and the 5% that didn't make you just sit there deflated.

I was talking this week to a friend of mine. We were talking about another guy. He's a comedian on stage and he was bombing. He looked over for exhortation from his mentor. The club owner and the mentor were standing off to the side and he's just struggling up there on stage. None of the audience were encouraging him. And exhortation is someone that like, "I'm going to say something to you, but it's with the hope and it's with the goal that you will do better with it, that you will be encouraged, that you will be uplifted and be so fired up and charged up that you'll go and do something." It's not these trite little "Hey, great job" and then walk on. No, it's like, "I'm going to exhort you to something."

The comedian is standing up there bombing on stage and he looks over to his mentor and the club owner and both of them are mouthing and motioning "Come off stage." That will crush you.

But, today, as we talk about his, we want you to know we come at it from the heart of anticipation and the heart of exhortation. We want to prompt you to do something with what you now know. We believe that we are to encourage one another with these words. We believe Jesus is coming back for his bride. And all God's people said... Amen.

I talk about this a lot and I've been thinking about this day a lot. My daughter, Corynn, who is 14, is going to get married at Dogwood Canyon at some point.

She goes, "You can't tell people that."

"Well, I'm paying for it; I'm telling them. I'll let you choose who he is, but I'm choosing where it is. That's how it's going to go down."

She got baptized there. I have this whole video in my head of her riding her bike through Dogwood Canyon as a little kid and then getting baptized and then getting married and then my funeral will probably be there to spread the ashes there or whatever we're going to do. We're going to make this happen.

Now some of you are going, "He's getting cremated?" I just opened up a whole other can of worms I have to explain. Actually, the teaching team is explaining that last part on the last message.

But, I have just played this out in my head I don't know how many time. Standing at the back of the church with my daughter. The bridesmaids walk down as they're supposed to do in this casual stroll and they meet down at the front and they line up perfectly for the pictures. I've seen it happen I don't know how many times standing at the front. That moment when the back door flies open... Sometimes you can't see anybody. I have this image because sometimes the doors open and there's no one there. Then when dad and daughter walk around the corner, we all lose it. Some of us try to hold it in, but I tell Corynn, "I'm going to be that guy one day and at that moment in time..."

Do you know what wedding I haven't thought a whole lot about until this week? It's my son's wedding, who has a little bit of my personality in him. He looks like me, he talks like me. I said, "One day, you'll be standing in line with your son at these rides, just swaying back and forth." I told him this week... I love doing this mainly for my wife because any time I talk about our kids' weddings, she gets choked up. But I'm going to be standing at the front of a church with him and he's going to be standing there and we're both going to be there when that door flies open and there's his bride. One day I'll get to say to my son... I can't wait to say it; I'm going to practice this and I'm going to think it through. It now has to share space in my brain with my daughter's wedding. I don't care where he gets married. He can get married wherever he wants because I ain't paying for it. But when those doors fly open and that bride starts walking down the aisle with her dad, I get to turn to my son and say these words, "Son, go get your bride." That's going to be a good day.

I want you to know there is a day on God the Father's timeline... There's a day coming where he's going to turn to his son and say, "Son, go get your bride." That's going to be a great day. That's a day I think we've lost in a lot of our modern worship music. It's a day that is saturating the great hymns of our faith as we think about the Lord's return. It's how the church is supposed to...

We just sang this; we declared this together. "Like a bride waiting for her groom..." The word *like* there isn't even really a great word. It should be "As a bride waiting for her groom, we'll be a church ready for

you. Every heart longing for our king.” That’s the anticipation and the exhortation we’re to have as we think about how he is coming to judge the living and the dead. “Every heart longing for our king, we sing.”

There’s one last thing and this is how we have to end a message like this. Anticipation, exhortation, but for the one right now who has never placed faith in Jesus, this is clear **conviction**. In Hebrews 9, we read, ***27 Just as people are destined to die once...*** If you grew up with the King James version – “It is appointed unto man once to die.” ***...and after that to face judgment, 28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin...*** He came as our Savior. He died on the cross, he was buried, he rose again, he ascended, he sits at the Father’s right hand, but he is coming back, not to do what he did at the beginning, he took care of that with his death on the cross. ***...but to bring salvation...*** the completion of our faith. ***...to those who are waiting for him.***

How we end our service today is I’m going to ask every head bowed and every eye closed. If you have never placed faith in Jesus, and upon the Lord’s return you’ve not eagerly been waiting because you’ve just been living your life here upon this earth or as Solomon would call it “under the sun” and you’re not thinking about the Son, but today, as judgment has been spoken, you realize you would be separated out as one who goes to eternal punishment, to everlasting torment in a place called hell. You say, “Ted, I want to respond to this message today and to the Word of God today by becoming a believer in Christ Jesus. I have never been born again. I have never placed faith in Jesus. Here, online, over at the chapel, we’re going to invite you that if you’ve never made a decision to place faith in Jesus, today is the day. We can’t teach on this without giving the opportunity for those who do not have a relationship with God to enter into a relationship with God through his Son, Jesus Christ. And you say, “Today is my day of salvation,” I’m going to invite you to stand right where you are and I’m going to invite you to pray a prayer as I pray as you place faith in Jesus Christ. If this is in your heart today. If you’re like, “I want to become a Christian, confess Jesus as Lord,” I’m going to invite you to stand.

As we enter into this time of worship, we’re actually going to give all of you a time. The prayer team has been prepared for today to invite you down to pray with someone during our last worship song as part of this message, as part of this series, to say, “Okay, I need to get some things straight; I need to get some things right. I need to figure some things out.” That’s why this prayer team is here for you.

Father, it’s in the name of Jesus that we give this time to you, we give this service to you. We eagerly await the coming of the Lord Jesus. We eagerly await the Father turning to the Son and saying, “Son, go get your bride.” We live in great hope and anticipation of that day. May our lives reflect it. May we know clearly that the service we do – the acts of generosity, caring for those who are sick, those who are needy, those who are homeless – are an overflow of our salvation, not the source of it.

So, today, for those who are wrestling, we pray for this service, we pray for what’s happening at the chapel, we pray for our next service, what happens here, there, online, that many will be responding to this message in a way that the Holy Spirit can call them by name.

It’s in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen.