



Jesus Is
Part 8 – Jesus is Coming Again
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Alright friends, as we mentioned, we hope you're beginning to find your rhythm in the new normal. This week, we actually found out that our kids will be finishing their school year at home, so that brought a whole bag of mixed emotions in our family. We've got all kinds of ends of the spectrum regarding social enjoyment. My oldest daughter Belle was especially bummed because she loves being around her friends so much. Really, at the Robbins household, we have never been so thankful for teachers. I just want say thank you to all the teachers and administrators out there. Really and truly, our value and our understanding and our perspective around how valuable you are to our kids' lives and to our community is skyrocketing. So, we greatly appreciate you.

My wife is like many mommies and daddies out there, putting on their teacher hat and hopefully finding their rhythm in that. I happen to have a private office, so I am still leaving the house every day for work. When I drive away, I feel like I'm going on vacation because my wife is calling the shots as I'm walking out the door. It is a lot to take on the education of your kids and to kind of navigate that. So, we cheer on all the moms and dads that are taking on that roll and responsibility in their home.

My wife jokes that by Thursday afternoon, she's praying fervently for the return of Christ. So, you can join her on Thursday afternoon, praying for the Second Coming.

Also, we realized that we would love to have a date night. It's been a while since we had a date night. We are quarantined away from all our best kid sitters and so we've kind of established that from 5:00 pm to 5:30 pm, we have 10x social distancing. So, all the kids have to be 60 feet away from us. During that 30-minute time, if they are going to cry, we instruct them to cry out to God because this is Mommy and Daddy time.

There is a lot of bad news out there, but frankly, I think there are a lot of great things, a lot of good news that's happening around our world right now. In fact, Tammy, in the back, called this kind of season in our world a forced sabbath. We find ourselves reconnecting as family, going deeper.

Some good friends of ours told me that in the last couple of weeks, they've had more family dinners than they had in the six months prior. That's an amazing thing. As a result of the family's reengaging and the social calendar being cleared, if we are intentional in our homes, we can grow. Granted, there are hard times. We are bickering and fighting in the Robbins household, but there have been amazing sweet times as well.

In fact, I have a really fun testimony, and this is just one that I happened to know about. Leslie and Brian Crouse, in the last couple of weeks, have welcomed two of their kids into the family of God. Gabriel and Micah, their two little twin boys – you'll see running around Woodland Hills – have accepted Christ and, on Easter, with their sister Esther, were baptized in a creek near their house. I think that is amazing! What great news!

Even in the Robbins family, a couple of weeks ago, Tess Robbins, our little kindergarten girl, became a follower of Jesus and accepted Christ into her heart. Tess, this is coming from your daddy, I am so proud of you.

So, kiddos, for those of you who are sitting out there and your perked up at the sound or the thought of that, you can make the commitment today with your family to be a follower of Jesus for the rest of your life. You can do it today and there's no better place, no more special place for you to make that decision than right there with your family today.

There is also some bad news out there. I know that any time you turn on the news you run into different stories out there. I ran into this one this one this week. In fact, Ted shared it with me. This is from MSN. It says, "The police department issues 'final warning' to Maryland residents and orders them to wear pants while checking their mailboxes." In the Ozarks, when you drive by and you see old man Brawner roll out of bed and head out to the mailbox, you just honk and wave! What is this world coming to?

Today, we're talking about Jesus coming again. Jesus is Coming Again. And that is a reason to be excited, and it's a way to frame up the way that you view your life and the way you live your life. We're going to look at a text together and we'd love for your family to open your Bible together to rally around it. We're going to go to John 14 and we're going to look at four verses. I think the whole family has a lot to take from this.

John 14 - **1** *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me."* This is a very relevant text for where we're at in our life today in the midst of the quarantine and the Coronavirus. Don't let your heart be troubled is the instruction we get from the Apostle John.

I think there is a really important point that I want to make this morning and it is **faith in Jesus comforts a troubled heart**. We can fill in all kinds of words for the word *troubled*. Faith in Jesus comforts a *concerned* heart, a *scared* heart, a *fearful* heart, a *surprised* heart, a *suffering* heart, an *angry* heart, a *depressed* heart. God comforts us in all of those places, and he eases our suffering in the midst of difficult times.

That word *comfort* is such an amazing word. As Christians, when we do some cross referencing to understand what it means to be comforted by God, 2 Corinthians 1: 3-5 is the place to go. I love this passage. It says, **3** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4* *who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5* *For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.*

That word *comfort*, if you look it up in the Greek, gives you kind of a pinpoint accuracy of what Paul is trying to say. The word is *a coming near*, to be comforted is to be coming near to your Father. I read through this text and I just kind of put that phrase in there and it makes the text come alive in my life. "Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all mercies and the God of all coming near, who comes near to us in all of our afflictions so that we may be able to come near to those who are in any affliction. With the coming near with which we received ourselves from God." Isn't that a powerful thought?

Sometimes when we are walking through hardship, we feel like God is out of touch or out of our reach, like he's six feet away and we can't quite engage with him. I'm here to tell you today that Jesus goes beyond the boundaries of social distancing. He walks with us in our hardship. He encouraged Joshua. He said, "Don't be afraid or dismayed for I am with you wherever you go." He wants to be there to walk through the hardship with us.

Ashley and I have someone very dear to us who is walking through divorce right now. I can't imagine... There is no good time to walk through a divorce, but I can't imagine walking through a divorce in the midst of a pandemic. It's just a collision of two horrific situations. Our hearts break for them. I know that as you guys are walking through... It might not be a divorce; it might be the loss of a job. It might be a loved one that is sick or any other number of things. You take that trial that you're walking through, that specific suffering and affliction, and then you put it on top or inside of a pandemic and it just compounds everything.

As Ashley and I, from a distance, we love and care for this dear person in our life, all we can hope and pray for and encourage is that they would move closer, that they would be comforted, that they would come nearer to their relationship with Jesus. That's because when we find ourselves in afflictions, there are really only two directions to go. Either we run from God or we run to God. I encourage you that as you are walking through your trials, you would run to God.

An amazing encouragement from 2 Chronicles 16: 9 - ***9 For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, so that he may strongly support a heart that is fully his.***

A passage in 1 Peter struck me this morning, almost before I walked on. It says this: ***12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.*** As I read that this morning, I realized it says "to the degree" that you join in Christ with his sufferings. So, I urge you, as you walk through your trials, to hit the reset button here today, to confess your sin to the Lord and to lean on him wholly to put all of your hope in him. And to the degree that you put your hope in Christ, you'll be able to match that or there is a corresponding joy that will be given to as you walk through that trial.

John 14 says this: ***2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go and prepare a place for you..."***

This is so fun. I want to speak to the kiddos out there and maybe the child at heart in all of you. Have you ever wondered what heaven is like? This passage is talking about Jesus. He said, "I'm going because I'm going to prepare a place for you in my Father's house." What would that be like? The Bible has over 500 scriptures that tell us what it will be like. I want to share just some of it with you today.

Finally, at the right time, God will take Satan and throw him in the lake of fire to be tormented forever at which time God will make all things new. There will be a new heaven and a new earth.

Through John in Revelation, the Bible describes the new heaven. He says, "I saw it coming down out of the sky and its appearance was like a diamond, sparkling and beautiful. It was like gold of clear glass." Its size was enormous. It was fifteen hundred miles wide, fifteen hundred miles long, and fifteen hundred miles high. Just the area of the base is nine times the state of Texas. And then the height... Check this out, it was 750,000 stories high. Do you think there are enough rooms in there for you? I know I do.

He goes on to describe it. He says that there is a wall that stands around it. It's a square and it's 72 yards high. It has three pearl gates on each side of it and three foundation stones on each side of it that shine like rubies. And each one of them is decorated with all kinds of beautiful stones.

It says that there is no longer any need for the sun, moon, or stars because the glory of Jesus illumines it all. There won't be any more nighttime. And then there is a beautiful river of the water of life that flows through the middle of the street and on each side of the river there are big, beautiful tree with the fruit of life with 12 kinds of fruit which bears fruit in every month and we get to partake of that.

This is the best part. We get to dwell in this place forever with Jesus and there is no longer any mourning, sadness, pain, or death. In fact, the scripture says he wipes every tear from our eyes. That's the heaven that we get to look forward to.

There are three things that I want to think about in regard to understanding how awesome heaven is, that's waiting for us.

This world is not our home.

1. This truth gives us gratitude for God's goodness and his grace during this life on earth. This life can be really great and when we follow Jesus, we can be joyful even in the midst of hardship, so it gives us gratitude.

2. This truth gives us hope beyond this broken mess. While this life is full of great things – specifically we'll be having custard together on Thursday and that's awesome. But at the same time, we're having custard in the midst of a pandemic that's really difficult for our world.

3. This truth gives us urgency to bring as many people with us as possible. If you place your hope in Jesus and you believe that heaven is going to be that good, and it will, that should give us an urgency to

share with those loved ones around us, the people we interact with as we go through out our days. We want to bring everyone we can to heaven with us.

Some of you, when you think about heaven, you might be filled with doubt. I would tell you that you are not alone. But when you encounter doubt, looking towards your hope, I want to remind you to look back at the history of God's goodness and you'll find out that he is faithful time and time again. In fact, just coming off the celebration of Easter, think about everything that was working against Jesus 2,000 years ago to wipe him from the face of human history. The devil harnessed what may be the most powerful world power in Rome that the world has every known. They were wicked, they were violent, and they were master executioners. So, not only did he harness all of Rome's power, but he also harnessed the most powerful people inside of Israel to wipe Jesus off the map. All the religious leaders, including the chief priest, turned all of their resources to wipe him off the map.

Then, finally, when Jesus was dead and buried, Pilate went to the soldiers and said, "Do everything in your power to make sure that no one goes and steals the body." That's because Jesus had said that in three days, he would be raised again from the dead. So, the soldiers rolled a huge stone in front of the tomb. They marked it with the seal of Rome and then they stood guard, understanding that if the body was taken, their lives would be taken. And with all of those forces coming down on the death of one man, he rose and defeated the grave. What that does is give me hope in Jesus and hope in heaven. This world is not our home.

John 14: 3 says, **3 "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.** Jesus would use weddings a lot as analogies when he would teach. According to Jewish tradition, a husband-to-be would be betrothed to his wife-to-be and he would go back to his father's house to prepare a place for them. He would build another room onto the home. And then, in the father's timing, the father would go to the betrothed son and he'd say, "Go get your bride." He would exit the house and then he would approach the house of his wife-to-be. He would take a shofar, a ram's horn, a trumpet made from a ram's horn and notify the bridal party to come out to them and then to follow them back to his home. There they would celebrate for seven days together.

For the kids out there, you're probably wondering what a shofar sounds like. I would like to demonstrate that here today. [Blows horn] Does that sound right, Ted? Where is Matt Gumm when I need him? More air and more pucker? [Blows horn] There it was. That was good. Just so you know, a shofar, the ram's horn reeks. If you've ever been around a ram, they smell from head to toe the same way; it's horrific, and I touched my mouth to it. If I was in your living room today, we'd pass it around and take a sniff together.

So, Jesus is coming again. He has gone to prepare a place for us and there will be a day – we call it the rapture – where he comes in the clouds and a loud trumpet will blow. And those of us who are believers, the church will meet him in the air, and he'll take us with him to be with him for eternity. That's the day that we look forward to as the church, and we are so excited that Jesus is coming again.

John 14: 4 – **4 "And you know the way where I am going."** Thomas follows up and he says, "Jesus, I don't understand. What do you mean? Where are you going? How to we get there?"

Jesus followed up in John 14: ***6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."***

My friends, Jesus is the way. And we don't know the time or the date of Christ's return, but we know the way. Jesus is the way through this pandemic. Jesus is the way through job loss. Jesus is the way through financial struggles. Jesus is the way through deteriorating health. Jesus is the way through earthly loss. Jesus is the way home.

My friends, Jesus isn't God just for the future; he is God for the here and the now. He wants to walk with you intimately. Through the midst of your situation, whatever it might be, today, he wants to walk with you intimately. Again, I want to charge families. If there are members of your family who have not made a commitment to place their faith in Jesus, today is the day. You can do that together as a family. I would encourage you to ask that question of each one of your family members. And for those that feel led by the Spirit to make that commitment, you get to do it together with your family today.

I would invite you to pray with me. Father God, we come to you and we just thank you for the amazing promise that you are coming again. I pray, God, that our faith would be bolstered, that we would be confident in your return. I pray, God, that we would long for it, and it would change the way we live our life today.

I pray that today would be a day of salvation, Lord. In the midst of all of the difficulties, God, there are many, many needs out there, God, and I pray that your people, and those who perhaps haven't made you the king of their life, would come to you with their needs and that you would meet them, you would come near to them and meet them right where they are at today.

It's in the mighty name of Jesus we pray... Amen.