



**Greater Joy**  
**Part 7 – Awaiting a Savior**  
Pastor Ted Cunningham

Good morning and Merry Christmas, church family, guests; we're glad that you're here. Everyone sitting outside... I can't believe we're still sitting outside in December. And over at The Chapel, Merry Christmas as we kick off the season here. Is everybody done with your Christmas shopping? If you're not, you will get nothing by December 25. They tell us you're too late.

Somebody got us a gift of a photoshoot with a local photographer in town. We have a ton of great photographers in our church. We decide to take them up on it this week. We went down to The Landing and went to that little park next to The Landing. You know when you take a picture and sometimes, they ask you to do awkward things. It just doesn't feel right, but then you see the picture and you're like, "Oh wow that actually look good." Never have I been asked to do this in all of my life. She said, "Alright, Amy, you stand here. Ted, you go 30 feet over there and I want you to run up, grab her, swing her around, and set her back down. The whole family looks at me and I'm like *should we stretch or something before we start this crazy photo shoot*. I didn't know. I'm not prepared.

She goes, "No, it's great. I do this with everybody; it works great and you're going to love the pictures." I don't know what... I maybe overdid it. But before I tell you what happened, we were on a hill. I want everybody to understand that. There was a slight incline.

I went like a lineman going after one of those dummies on the football field. I grabbed her and at a 180, I was off balance. When I came back around, I body slammed my wife into the ground, and then I ended up on the ground next to her. We're both laying on our backs because we're at that age we can't get up right away. I'm just laying there. We get up and look at the photographer and she's looking at us with her mouth agape. She says, "I've never had this happen before." I'm laying on the ground going, "I told you we should have stretched!" So, we don't want any more service-oriented gifts; that's all I'm trying to tell you. Let's just go back to the cookies. Who got me cookies down here?

We welcome you to Woodland Hills Family Church; we're glad you're here. Part of our worship is we take an offering at our church. We do it in boxes in the foyer, you can give at the Church Center App, hit the "give online now button." All of our church at home family, we're glad that you're tuning in. You can hit that "give online button" now to give or your can text the amount to 84321. Next week, we will share with you all that we took in from The Big Give and explain to you where all of your giving will be going.

We're going to continue today in Philippians as we talk about *Awaiting a Savior*. If you have your Bibles and want to turn to Philippians 3, we're going to pick up in Verse 14, right where Shay left off last week, and we are going to continue through to Verse 21. We're talking today about eagerly awaiting a savior. We're celebrating Christmas, which is celebrating the birth of Christ, the first coming of Christ, but as we celebrate the first coming of Christ, follower of Jesus, we are to be eagerly awaiting the second coming of Christ. If you follow with advent, you'd light the candles. Last week, we lit the hope candle, and we are eagerly awaiting the coming of the Lord.

Over the last couple of years... And I don't know if it's going to be more so the older I get, but I am longing for the return of Christ Jesus to this earth. That is what we are celebrating when we celebrate Christmas as well.

You know when the angel appeared to the shepherd in Luke 2: 10, the angel said to them, ***Do not be afraid***, for every lost man, woman, boy, girl here today, please hear this. Today we are to declare to you the good news that brings great joy for all people. That is what we do as we begin this Christmas season.

And we are in between these two statements. The first one is Christ has come, and we've been singing about that today. Today, we've been celebrating the birth of Christ, but we are in between Christ has come and come Lord Jesus. We are longing for the return of the Lord. Here's the bottom line that's going to take us through the entire text today in Philippians.

How we wait matters. So, this isn't just a message on patience. Some would say that it really has nothing to do with patience. We're not even talking about patience today. But patience would be that ability to wait. Well, we're not talking about ability to wait. We're going to see clearly in the text today Paul teaching us what we need to do while we eagerly await the return of Christ because we are to continue to press on.

Waiting is not something we're really that good at. If you hate waiting, would you raise your hand. If you love waiting, like that's your favorite thing to do, would you just raise your hand. Last week, after Thanksgiving... I've lived in Branson 20 years. I have never seen towns so crazy as those couple of days after Thanksgiving. This is terrible. If you are a tourist here today, would you raise your hand. We want to welcome you to our church before we talk about you. We're glad you're here; we really are. We love you. Welcome. But, wow, we just need to... I don't know. We've got quotas and all sorts of things around; we just need to limit the amount of people that come to town because it was a lot. We walk our dogs down at The Landing to get them socialized. We have a one-year-old, 60 lb. dog so we like to take him down to The Landing.

We went down to The Landing, which was a huge mistake on Saturday. I couldn't find a parking space over there by Belk. I'm not going to wait. I'm the type I'll drive to Springfield to get my item that I need before I wait five minutes for a parking space. I was trying to wait. But then I noticed people were making up their own spots. Did you notice this. I mean it was aggressive. They were pulling up on curbs, driving on grass. We get out and we're walking the dogs. Shay Robbins had a fantastic message last week on self-righteousness. If you haven't heard, go back to last week and look at the fact that you

always need to be right. And that you always need to share your rightness with other people. That was so spot on at Thanksgiving. You hear a conversation going on with someone talking and you hear something wrong and your like, *I gotta get over there really quick and get my rightness into that conversation*. That was me in the Branson Landing parking lot, walking around, looking at all these cars parked crazy. I'm pointing them out. There was a F250 King Ranch with a Texas license plate that hopped the curb in the grass and parked up against a sapling tree. And I'm saying this stuff out loud. I called it out to Amy. I go, "Who's he think he is? He doesn't own this state." I go around the corner and there is a brand-new, macked out Bronco hopped the curb, on the grass, at an angle like he's in a showroom somewhere. It comes out of mouth. "What a cocky Bronco owner." This is the whole time.

I come to church at 8:30, first service. I'm dealing with my self-righteousness. I don't have the patience for these people. I go out afterwards and realize that that Bronco is in our parking lot. And that Bronco belongs to someone who has been a member of this church for almost 20 years. That Bronco owner's brother was the preacher last Sunday. Now I'm not telling you who it is. But I went out... This is what I love and will always love about living and pastoring in a small town. I walked out and I meet... let's just say his initials are Blake Robbins. He goes, "Hey, I got a new Bronco; you want to see it?" I walked over and I said right to him, "You're a cocky Bronco Owner. Who taught you how to park?"

So, I always want you to feel the message before we get into the text. Are you there? I'm going to be interested where he's parked after this service. If he's parked anywhere other than between two lines, he is done and at First Baptist Branson. Will let Jeremy deal with him; we ain't gotta put up with that type of stuff around here. Sir, we're just having fun. I just want to make sure you know.

All of that to say we're not talking about the ability to wait; we're talking about how we wait. We're waiting for the second coming of Christ. We're eagerly, as we are going to see today in the text, awaiting the second coming of Christ. So, how are you doing with waiting? What do you do? What is your immediate, inside, when you see this in a theme park with your kids (sign that says, "Wait time 180 Minutes")? Are you waiting three hours for a three-minute ride? How are you waiting? What are you waiting for?

If we can go very serious. There are some of you who are waiting for a pandemic to end. I'm just going to say this to my ultra-opinionated friends. How you wait matters.

Some of you are waiting for an answer to prayer. Are you still praying? Are you still seeking the Lord? Have you been praying for so long that you've given up? Because that's what happens when we wait. Some of us wait and worry. Some of us wait and give up. Some are waiting and disappointed. Some are waiting and feel rejected. Some of you are waiting for a lost child to come home. Have you given up? Have you stopped pursuing that child, the relationship with that child? Have you stopped praying for that child's salvation? Some of you are waiting for a strained relationship to reconcile. You've tried everything. You say, "I know, make every opportunity, take every opportunity." Have you taken the opportunities or are you done? You're waiting too long.

Some are waiting for a breakthrough in your marriage. Some of you are waiting and waiting and waiting and you're at the point of giving up. You've waited. And, again, it's not just about patience, the ability to wait. We're talking about how we wait today.

I hear this all the time and I wait with people as they are waiting for a biopsy test result. Some people go in later on in the week. That's a hard weekend. That's a difficult weekend. Those are the calls that we usually take that are like, *I just need to know*. How we wait matters.

Some of you have had your reputation kicked through the mud and you're waiting for the lies about you to be debunked and the truth to come out.

You know what hit me this week as we talk about the finish line being heaven? As we talk about our ultimate prize, the ultimate prize is in Christ Jesus. As I think about heaven being the finish line... Not retirement, not graduation, not a good test result. That's not the finish line. The finish line is when we are face to face with Jesus.

I thought about this. Some of us are going to have lies spread about us. You're going to have a lie spread about you and guess what? This side of heaven, the truth may never be received by others, that member of your family or online. That's why my pull and my focus, your pull and your focus is heavenward. As a citizen of heaven, you know that longing that we should have.

Today, as we talk about celebrating the birth of Jesus, we're really in between as we eagerly await the return of Christ.

Picking up where Shay ended last week in Philippians 4: 14, we read, **14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.** Stay focused on that because we're going to end with that as well today.

We are going to jump into Verse 15 with this idea. I am called, until I am with the Lord, to run my race and to cheer on other runners. You've heard it said... I've always loved the expression, "Stay in your lane." You know what that means? Stay in your lane means whatever God's called you to, what you're supposed to do, the gifting, the calling, the passion, the experience, the heart motivations. All of that. Stay in your lane. But as followers of Jesus, there are runners in other lanes. And what we're to do is, yes, run our race, but as those pass us, what are we to do? Cheer them on. We are to be cheering on others. We are to have Pauls in our life, as we are going to see today. We're also to have Timothies. We are to have those who are running ahead of us, looking to them as good examples, and we are to be a good example for those who are running behind us. Run your race and cheer on others in theirs.

**15 All of us, then, who are mature...** The word *mature* there means perfected or complete. If you've ever wondered if there is humor in the scripture, this is one of the verses you can look to because some scholars believe this is Paul using sarcasm. He is mocking those who are spreading heresy around in Philippi and he's mocking them by saying. "For those who feel they've arrived... They've reached a state of perfection." They think he's pointing that out in others, but he's going to use it in a different way. I love this and it's a lesson for all of us today. All of us, they, who are mature, **...should take such a view**

**of things.** Eagerly awaiting the return of Christ. **And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.** Understanding that we are all in different places in our race and at different paces. He says God will make that clear to you. If there's something you don't know yet, pray, learn, seek, grow, be discipled. Find other runners to come alongside you and help you with it. **16 Only let us live up to what we have already attained.** Meaning we don't want to take steps backwards.

Stuart Briscoe has a great paraphrase in his commentary on this that I want to share with you, and I think it's for all of us to take to heart today. It's his paraphrase of these verses 15 and 16. Here's what he says. He's saying, "Paul is summing up this idea of maturity in this way." And this is true for those of you who are 70 and those of you who are 17. He says, "Paul is making the point, I am complete in the sense that I have grown as far as I can at the present and I am ready for the next lesson. I stand ready for the next lesson."

In the last service, we had 87-year-old Pat Kershaw. I have coffee with her from time to time and she sits down with me. I can't remember all of the lessons that she has taught me over the last 20 years, but what I do remember is how many times, at Panera Bread or at Starbucks or wherever we would meet, her teaching me and telling me what God is teaching her. Eighty-seven years old and she is not done receiving the next lesson.

What Paul is saying here in this text is for those who are mature... You say, "I am a mature..." or we would also say seasoned believer in Christ Jesus. You've learned everything you need to learn up to this point, but can we be honest? Some of you have stalled out. Some of you have stopped running. Some of you have stopped pressing on. And you're not awaiting the next lesson. Let's just go there for a moment. Take it in for a second. Have you stalled out in your pursuit of Christ? Again, when we talk about running the race and pressing on, we're not talking about winning our salvation. We cleared that up early on in this series. We are working out our salvation, we're not working for our salvation. But we are continuing and pressing on.

Some of you... because you're tired... Would you just raise your hand if you're tired? We can be honest. We get tired. "Ted, I'm not tired; I'm exhausted. Life has beat me down." And what has happened, because you're tired, or because you're exhausted, you're no longer digging into scripture. You stopped serving. I hear this all the time at this church, and I just wish we wouldn't hear it ever again after today. "I did my time; it's time for the younger people to come in and do it." Well, how about this. Show them how to do it. Keep running. Keep pressing on. Keep moving forward to the prize in which you were called in Christ Jesus. Keep running your race and cheer on young people. We don't need you to step aside. Some of you have stalled out and you need to get back in the race.

We talked about it in the debrief and I loved it. I asked Travis Brawner, an athlete, if somebody decides they're going to start running; they haven't been running for a long time, how do they get back into running? I'm speaking for a friend. He said, "It's really simple. Start slow." Some of you have quit serving, you've quit studying, you've quit reading. Your prayer life, if you're being honest, is a meal prayer. Your time with the Lord is 10 seconds before every meal. You've stalled out. I just want today to be an encouragement for all of us, and through the encouragement of Paul as we eagerly await the return of Christ to get back in the race. Start running. Don't lose what you have already attained.

In Hebrews 6: 1, I love what the writer says. ***Therefore, let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ...*** You're like, *I've learned all that*. Well, keep going. Don't stop. ***...and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation...***

So, what we are going to see through the rest of this text is Paul telling us to follow good examples, be good examples, and then he's also going to share with us who we need to stay away from because how we wait matters. So, who should I be running with? Let's look at a few of them. You should run with those who take growth seriously. Those who take growth seriously and have not stalled out and they're still growing in their life.

You should run with those who stand strong, not still. Some of you have strong opinions in here. They are the same political opinions that you've held for 40 years, and you are strong and you are dogmatic. If anybody wants to share something with you or read something and ask you to explain it... You've stalled out. You're standing, but you're still. And we're called to stand. And yes, we did a whole series on *Armor* and how to stand in the battle. But another great word picture from the scripture as we're seeing today is press on, keep moving.

I'm 40 years younger than Pat Kershaw and if the Lord keeps me upon this earth for another 40 years, if he doesn't return for 40 years, I hope I'm in Panera Bread, meeting with someone younger, encouraging them to run their race. Not about a race I used to run. Not let me tell you about when I was younger... No, it's like here's what God is teaching me now. Here's what I'm learning now. Here's how I'm growing now. So, find someone who is standing strong but not still.

Run with those who look out for others and their growth. Run with someone who can point things out in your life and be like, "You know, you've told me about this, and you just shared that story with me, and can I just tell you something that popped out of that story to me..." Be willing to be challenged as iron sharpens iron. Be willing to be challenged when someone is like I went through a similar time in my marriage or as a parent or at my work I was asked to do something questionable and here's how I responded. Be willing to have your growth challenged.

I love this and this comes right out of Verses 15 and 16. Run with those who understand that we all run at different paces. Dr. Chuck Swindoll... I've always loved his preaching and his writing. I want to give a couple of quotes to you by Dr. Swindoll. *"Paul, in this text, graciously acknowledges that everybody grows up in Christ at different paces."* The church needs to hear that. We need to be reminded that we're all not running at the same pace. I've been challenged in this. There are some people that they want a strong vibrant relationship with Christ, and they are having capacity issues to do so. Sometimes it's a physical ailment. We're going to see it in a moment with this idea of lowly bodies. We all have lowly bodies and this side of heaven, they are going to break down and they are going to struggle because of sin, disease, ultimately death. But we are to continue on to press on. So, we all run at different paces.

*"In this spiritual marathon, some will be nearing the finish line at full speed. Others will be farther behind. Some will be trudging along at a snail's pace."* And there are those in here I would say this is

true of too. *“And a few will be dragged along by others.”* We welcome those who were drug here today. We’re glad you’re here.

*“Paul knew that not everybody was yet in the same condition for running the race at top speed, but he was confident that God would continue to work in them toward the upward call in Christ Jesus.”*

Run with those who encourage you to keep running. He goes on to say this: *“Living the Christian life is a team sport, not a solo mission.”* This is why my passion will always be the local church. I love the local church. I love everything about the local church. I meet people all the time that tell me. “You know my church is big C church, and I get all I need sitting on my dock on a Sunday.” I’m here to tell you no you don’t. You need other believers in your life challenging you and encouraging you.

It’s why we tell people who are watching from states away that say Woodland Hills is their church home. You’re five states away, you’re 1,000 miles away and you say this is my church home. We love that this is a supplement to helping you and encouraging you but when you have an emergency in your life, we can’t be there for you. But guess what? A local church can. Find one. Plug into one. Dig into that so you can be encouraged by others. It’s a team sport, a team effort, not a solo mission.

To me this is the perfect example of not just Woodland Hills Family Church but of First Baptist Church, Bloom Church. People running in this race together. *“As each of us maintains our own level of spiritual maturity, we also encourage others to do the same,”* Dr. Swindoll says. *“We are to lock arms with our brothers and sisters in the family of God. If we see one of our brothers slowing down in the race, we need to take him by the arm and encourage him to press on. When we see a sister out of breath from the exasperating challenges of life, we need to remind her to look up and look forward to press on toward maturity.”*

I have a friend who is watching right now. We had a great talk a couple of weeks ago about this idea of being a good model. People are watching. We say it all the time around here. Our children are watching, they’re listening, remembering, and repeating. They see everything you do. This is why you can’t stall out in your faith. This is why you can’t stop, Grandma and Grandpa, you’re like, “I did it; I’m so tired.” Keep going. Why? Because you have grandchildren now that are watching and you’re a model.

My friend told me, “Ted, I’m a passionate hunter.” Let me see all the hunters in the room. You’re going to love this story and it may convict you in a different way. He said, “You know, when I moved out of Branson...” He moved to another state. He said, “I can’t believe how many years I’ve lived here and have not hunted yet.” They live on a few acres. His daughter is getting older. I know the family is watching right now. He said, “I went out and I taught her how to find the deer we want. Where the buck was bedding and then some scrapes so we could see the rut and everything. It was just perfect.”

He said, “One afternoon, I had a couple hours. I went out and sat by a tree. I was there 30 minutes, and this eight-point buck comes walking down the trail. I dropped the buck.” He said, “Ted, the weather was perfect, where I dropped the buck was going to be just a short pull onto the back of my truck bed. He said, “With the whole thing, I’m going Lord, this is of you. This is so perfect.”

He drives it back to his driveway and he brings his wife and daughter. They're celebrating because the daughter helped find this deer.

He sits down that night to register the deer on the state's website and realizes he's a week early. I heard some going, "What's the big deal?" It's illegal. He typed in his state's name and then the hunting laws and he got some bogus sight that had bad information, but he screen shot it and the next day he called the conservation department and got an officer. He tells the whole story to the officer and there is silence on the other end of the phone. He asked the officer, "Has this ever happened before?" The officer goes, "It happens all the time but nobody every calls to tell us about it."

My friend said, "I pride myself on being a hunter, but more than that, I'm a dad and my daughter is watching. I want her to see." He asked the officer, "How's this going to go down." The officer said, "I'll have to call you back. we don't have this happen enough. We don't have policy on it. Let me figure out what's going on." The officer calls him back and says, "I'm going to have to come get the rack, write you a citation to appear in court. "

He shows up and my friend is sitting at the back of the truck, talking to him. My friend had already had the deer processed and given to a homeless shelter. He brings his family out to introduce him to the officer and the officer is like, "Wow, this doesn't ever happen. I don't ever get introduced to families in such a nice way." This story is so fantastic because I'd love to tell you who my friend is but his court date is December 15. How many thinks he should get a little leniency? Who says throw the book at him? Nobody had their hand up. Well, a couple of people from California, but... That was for other reasons. We love California. We have new members from California. Would you help me welcome all our members from California?

It was such a great moment, such a powerful testimony. He' like, "My daughter is watching, and it matters. I have to do the right thing even when the right thing is the hard thing. I want to be a good example. I want her to follow a good example so she can be a good example."

We read this in Philippians 3: 17 about this whole maturity and pressing on. **17 Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, Paul says, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.** The bottom line is this. On your walk, in your journey, in your run, whatever illustration we put on this, as you press on to maturity in Christ, choose your examples carefully. Find those who are continuing to run in their race and cheering you on in yours.

He's going to take a turn now in Verse 18. Before he does, I want to show you this quick clip because it just reminds me that as you press on to maturity in Christ, when you leave here, when you leave a gathering of the local church or other believers, you're going to feel alone, you're not going to feel supported or encouraged. You're going to feel a lot like this young man who practiced hard for his school's Christmas play. Watch what happens to him. The best part is that trumpet player stops and looks around. You see all the parents doing the same thing. Let's hear it for that band teacher right there. You keep at it, buddy.



This is why it's important to be a part of the local church. You don't have to run alone. Stop running alone.

Now he's going to move to Verse 18 and we're going to learn to stop running with enemies of the cross. Stop running with them. Stop allowing them to corrupt you. Here's what he says. This is as serious as it gets. **18 For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears...** These are tears of compassion. He's broken by this. He doesn't want the church at Philippi to be led astray, to drift astray, to compromise along their race. He says, **...many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.**

Young people, hear me. Stop following them. Stop following their example. Stop being influenced by them. Stop drifting with them. There are many today and you're going to hear this term more and we'll probably talk about it more in 2022, but there are many in evangelical churches today who are doing what's called *deconstructing their faith*. We don't have time to unpack that today, but if that's you and your like, *there is a lot I need to deconstruct after the last election, the last presidential cycle, what happened through the pandemic. I'm deconstructing.* Can I encourage you? Don't go on the path of destruction that leads to a shipwrecked faith.

**19 Their destiny is destruction...** I think there are ways you can deconstruct without destroying your faith. But their destiny is not eternal joy, it's destruction. **...their god is their stomach** (sensual desires), **and their glory is in their shame.** We see this every day in our country. People who are living rebellious lifestyles towards God and they are finding glory in it. He says this is the path of destruction; they are enemies of the cross. **Their mind is set on earthly things.**

**20 But our citizenship is in heaven.** How many times have we heard this over the last few months at our church? We have a dual citizenship. We are citizens of the Kingdom of God first and then citizens of the United States of America second; they are not on the same level. One is over the other... period.

If you've ever traveled... I love traveling, and when I'm in a foreign country, I love visiting and I love learning about the culture and eating the food and spending time with people, but I can't wait to get home. Does anybody know what I'm talking about? You can't wait to get home. Some of you have journeyed to places like Louisiana and Arkansas and Texas and Oklahoma. You go there on vacation, and you have a great time, but you can't wait to get home because there is a pull, and let me tell you, being a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, we live our life here under the sun, upon this earth, but our pull is heaven.

**And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control...** This is where your exhaustion is coming from. **...will transform our lowly bodies...** When I asked you to raise your hand if you're exhausted, that's why – our lowly body. Sin, disease, ultimately death. Seventy years you may have upon this earth, eighty if your strong, but those years are filled with sorrow and anguish, challenging times, obstacles we face, tragedy, mourning. We go through all of that, but our citizenship is not here. And some of these things that we're waiting for, I may wait for a lifetime upon this earth, but I will no longer after Christ returns. **...so that they will be like his glorious body.**

There's a wedding coming. I love weddings. This is my favorite wedding picture until May 31 of next year when my daughter marries Caden Hazell. But I've been showing this picture for however long they've been married. This is Matt and Katie. The only time R.P. has ever embraced Matt at such a level. I can't even explain it. While he whispers in his ear, "I'm gonna kill ya." But I love this picture because a day is coming where there's going to be a wedding. Think about this. One day, the Father... If you've been to a wedding, I just love that moment in the back. I told Caden this has been my joke for 13 years, since Corynn was five years old. I told him on May 31, I'll retire it. He goes, "Don't retire it. I love that joke. Keep that joke in there." I go, "Are you sure?"

The joke is one day... I told my daughter this when she was five. "One day, Corynn, I'm going to stand at the back of a church with you, looking down the aisle at some pervert." That pervert now has a name. I said, "You gotta let me retire that joke." He goes, "Nah, keep it in; I love it." But on May 31, I'm going to stand at the back of an aisle with her and walk her down the aisle and give her away as my princess to become Caden's queen.

And every time I think about a wedding, this is what it means to eagerly await the return of the Lord. I hope as you celebrate Christmas, don't get so caught up in all the festivities that you lose sight of your citizenship in heaven because that day is coming where the Father is going to turn to his Son Jesus and say, "Son, go get your bride." That's what we're eagerly awaiting. Until the Lord returns or calls me home, I'm running, I'm standing, not still, firm, but still moving on. Cheering you on in your race. You cheer me on in my race. We cheer each other on until that day when the Father turns to his Son and said, "It's time." As we celebrate the birth and the first coming of Christ, we eagerly await the second coming of Christ. And how we wait matters.

Father, it's in the name of Jesus that I pray for the one who stalled out years ago. They can think of a time where they were running hard and fast toward Jesus, but that has slowed down and come to a halt. Some no longer are living up to what they attained, that they would today be ready for the next lesson. They would think of all they've learned and seek you and continue to run and press on.

For the one who has never placed faith in Jesus that today would be the day of their salvation. What a time to give your life to Christ as we celebrate the first coming of Christ that we would be prepared for the second coming. For the one who is not prepared for the second coming of Christ that today would be the day of their salvation. That they would confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in their heart that he has been raised from the dead that they would be saved.

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