

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, November 12, 2016

Have you ever been to a “Come As You Are” party? Well, the concept was popular when I was young and I understand this quirky method of celebrating a birthday still goes on these days. Just imagine the birthday girl and her Mom showing up at your house at 7AM and letting your daughter know that the birthday celebration starts now and you have to “come just as you are” without prettying up, pajamas and all! This may seem awfully silly to you, but most kids buy into the fun and go along with the invitation. Guys are less inclined to participate than girls. On a different note are you prepared to come as you are?

In Revelation, the final book of the Bible, John prophesies the end times and we are privileged to see what lies ahead for mankind. I personally do not find this account terrifying, but it is sobering. What this book shows us is amazing and hard for most folks to swallow. The first three chapters discuss past historical events, the Church (all who follow Christ) and suddenly there's no mention of the Church from then on. That's because all believers will be lifted up before the tribulation takes place.

Then John's vision takes us on a futuristic journey into coming catastrophic events, which many find difficult to comprehend. Those events deal with the judgment of God on this world, but happily ends with the triumphal entry of Jesus as Lord of Lords and King of Kings. This allegorical account is easily written off as nonsensical to those many who don't believe the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God.

Certainly, most will agree we live in troubling times here on earth. Many of us face difficulties that we would never have anticipated earlier in our lives. There's hatred and violence all around us and even the earth seems to be groaning in agony. Something is certainly amiss and I believe we are entering the End Times as presented in John's account of the revealing of Christ and these things to come.

There is good news though. Even in all this doom and gloom, Christ still waits at the door and knocks, but He needs you to let Him in. In Revelation 3:20 He declares, *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with Me.”* In verse 22 He continues, *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

Recently I came across a song produced by Crowder, a Christian Gospel artist, which he released in 2014 that hits the nail on the head. It's called *COME AS YOU ARE* and it does a very nice job of reminding us that Christ is waiting with open arms for those who are prepared to come to Him. Here's the catch folks. We need to come as we are. There's nothing that we can do or say other than come humbly to the door and ask Him to forgive us of our sin and gladly accept what He accomplished for us on the cross 2000 years ago.

Listen to some of the words from this song. *“So lay down your burdens/Lay down your shame/All who are broken/Lift up your face/Oh wanderer come home/You're not too far/So lay down your hurt/Lay down your heart/Come as you are.”* It's that simple. Please come as you are!

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 10:14-15; Revelation 3:20-22; Revelation 22:16-17

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Passages to Ponder: Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 10:14-15; Revelation 3:20-22; Revelation 22:16-17

Matthew 11:28-30 New Living Translation (NLT)

²⁸Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

Mark 10:14-15 New Living Translation (NLT)

¹⁴When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. ¹⁵I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it."

Revelation 3:20-22 New Living Translation (NLT)

²⁰"Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends. ²¹Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne.

²²"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches."

Revelation 22:16-17 New Living Translation (NLT)

¹⁶"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this message for the churches. I am both the source of David and the heir to his throne. I am the bright morning star."

¹⁷The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let anyone who hears this say, "Come." Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life.