



Advent (Part 1) – Already But Not Yet

Matt Chandler – December 3, 2017

Josh Patterson: Good morning, church. The Scriptures tell us that it's good to be reminded and that it's good to remember. I have the great privilege of reminding us, our church body, this morning, that this weekend marks 15 years of faithful ministry by Matt Chandler on behalf of our church. It has been a really sweet weekend. It has been a really tender, emotional weekend as we've recounted and been reminded of the Lord's faithfulness to us. I want to turn your attention to a video. We'll watch that, and I'll be back up shortly.

[Video]

Josh Patterson: Matt and I first met in the summer of 2001. I had graduated college and was working for a ministry called Cross Camp, and Matt was an itinerant preacher, teacher, communicator.

Michael Bleecker: I met Matt at Metro. I had been leading for a year, and the speaker left, so I knew there was this new guy coming. They had said his name. I had not heard of him. He walked up to me when we were finished with rehearsal at Metro and introduced himself, and a year later, pretty much telling me he was called to The Village.

Lauren Chandler: I met Matt in Evergreen, Colorado. I was a camper at my youth camp, and he was the camp speaker. He was just a much more raw version of himself now, where everything was... The extremes were extreme.

Michael: The thing that has changed the most over the last 15 years is that he has grown in his compassion, especially for those who are hurting and, I would say, especially for those who have cancer. I think he can feel in a way that others can't feel for the person who has cancer, who is hurting, and the family members.

Josh: What I've seen most in Matt probably the last three years is Matt embracing who God has made Matt as a man and less who God has made Matt in terms of what Matt can do.

Michael: One of the greatest things I've learned from Matt Chandler is just watching his life. He's one of those guys who's faithful and on all the time. The care he takes and has for other people has really affected me, it has affected my family, and I think it has affected my ministry.

Josh: He's had such a profound impact on me as a man, as a person, and on my wife and on our family. It's kind of hard to even tease it apart about where it even started and how deep it really runs, because it just feels like I'm so immersed in it. I am who I am, in some sense, because of how God has used him, how he has used your brother in my life.

Lauren: Some of the biggest messages I've heard from Matt weren't what I heard from stage. They were the ones that were lived at home, the message of "I love you no matter what," the message "I'm here no matter what." I know he says we don't ever say, "You complete me." It's right. Jesus completes us, but I would not be who I am without him, and I will keep being true.

Guy Mason: Thank you, Matt, for your friendship, your incredible passion for the gospel, your undeniable love for the Lord, and, of course, your goofy sense of humor. Love you, mate.

Geoff Ashley: Thank you for forcing me to confront my fear of public speaking by making me do announcements on Saturday night and for giving me a lot of teaching reps. Love you, bro.

Rex Cole: Hey, Matt. I'm thankful for your faithfulness to the Lord, to Lauren, to your kids, to the gospel, and to the church.

Jen Wilkin: Thank you for giving me your trust. Thank you for giving me a place to serve in the local church. Thank you for your friendship, and thank you for telling me I had something to say and then amplifying my voice. Your friendship to me has been a huge gift, and I pray that you have many, many more years here at The Village Church.

Anne Lincoln Holibaugh: Matt, what a joy to celebrate 15 years of your ministry to the people of The Village Church. God has used you to love and lead and shepherd and feed his people here, and we are so thankful. We love you. Here's to 15 more faithful years and then 15 after that.

JT English: Brother, long before I came to work here at The Village Church alongside you, I had this deep respect for you and for your ministry and what the Lord was doing here. So now to have the opportunity to labor alongside you for the sake of the gospel is one of the deepest joys and pleasures of my life. Thank you so much for the opportunity. I love you, and I can't wait to continue to see what the Lord is going to do among us.

Kent Rabalais: Hey, Matt. The one story that came to mind for me is when you called me, or maybe it was texting, and asked about how I was doing after my dad died. It was really incredible to know that even though my earthly father had passed away my heavenly Father had provided men to care for me after that. It reminds me just how well you love us. We love you. Thank you, Matt.

Doug Stanley: Fifteen years, Matthew. It's hard to believe it has been that long...until I listen to some of your old sermon tapes.

[Audio clip]

Matt Chandler: ...shuttle van in. We have run out of parking out there, so one of the things we do... We were down at the Cellar liquor store, parking our cars, and a good friend of mine named Ron walked up and said, "It's been a good morning already. Put the kids in the car, headed to the liquor store."

[End of clip]

Seriously, Matthew. Thank you for your 15 years of leadership through accent changes and much, much more. I thank the Lord for you, and I'm asking him for many, many more years.

Trevor Joy: I am a better father, husband, pastor, and friend today because you have been a faithful father, husband, pastor, and friend to me. Love you, brother. Thank you.

Beau Hughes: Well, Bishop, happy 15 years, man. It's been quite the journey, and I'm just so thankful that I've gotten to be a part of it with you. Thank you for loving me and being a good friend to me, but more so for loving God's people in the ways that you have. I'm thankful. I just pray and am excited for many years more together in the days ahead.

Brian Miller: You've made a mark on my life personally, professionally, and pastorally. I love you, brother. You're a gift to me and my family.

John Piper: Fifteen years at The Village Church. I love you, Matt. Our friendship is very precious to me. Congratulations.

Steve Hardin: I'm just so grateful to be in your life and to be a part of all that God is doing in your life and in Lauren's life. Julie and I and the Hardin family and the Dallas Campus are just grateful for both of you.

Charity Ready: Matt, thank you for all that you have done to equip and encourage church planters. You have been a blessing in my family's life. Thank you for rejoicing with us when we rejoiced. Thank you for mourning with us when we mourned. You have been an unbelievably loving pastor toward me, toward my family, toward our church, and I'm thankful for you.

Hunter Hall: Hey, man. You've been a constant source of encouragement to me in my life, in my darkest of days when my father passed away, your phone call, the way you encouraged me. Back when I was 18 and we were traveling around in a smelly green van together... You may not even realize it, but the Lord used you to help make that feel more like a family to me. So thank you for being not just an amazing communicator of the gospel but a faithful pastor to care for the hearts of men and women, myself included. Thank you so much.

Audrey Chandler: I just want to say thank you for always being there for me and Reid and Norah, and I'm proud of you for being here and leading the church.

Reid Chandler: Thank you for staying in The Village for 15 years, and thank you for helping me out in football and buying my pads and stuff. Thank you.

Norah Chandler: Hey, Dad. Thank you for being the best dad in the world to me and getting to be the best pastor at The Village Church.

Josh: My hopes and prayers for Matt are that he would continue to remain faithful, that he would abide in Christ and produce fruit that would remain, fruit that would last.

Michael: Continued health. That's one of my prayers for him. Faithfulness, because this job is really hard; that he's humble. Though he's one of those kind of famous pastors, he's humble. My hope is that he would remain faithful in that, and I believe he will.

Lauren: That he gets his 40 years here; that the family at The Village Church would expand and continue to expand generation after generation; that it wouldn't be about a big building but it would be about lives changed, the gospel going forth all over the world; that Matt would remain as playful and as hungry for the Lord, as passionate for people as he is today; that that would not fade but it would only grow more and more with time.

[End of video]

Josh: Village Church, as we continue to grow in celebration, would you guys welcome up Matt? We rejoice in the Lord for what he has done in and through you. This is no surprise. We did this at the 5:00 and the 7:15 last night, so we have done this now a couple of times, and every time Matt has walked up it's not any easier. It's just sweet. The Lord has been kind and good to us as a people, because he has given us a faithful shepherd, and that's no small thing.

I know if we had time we could literally go row by row, seat by seat, and testify of the Lord's goodness. Not so that we're building up Matt but that we're building up the Lord who has been good to us in giving us a faithful man and that our lives and our hearts have been changed and transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's amazing.

Brother, you just need to know, as these brothers and sisters stood for you, they're standing with hearts full of gratitude and appreciation for the way you have preached and heralded and proclaimed and taught, and then out there, shepherding, the phone calls, the hospital visits. You are a faithful man, and you need to absorb that and know that. Let me pray for Matt and pray for his transition into preaching.

Father, we love you. There is so much to say that a 10-minute video doesn't even begin to capture it. Even as I look out here at this 9:00 service, I know even at the campuses in Fort Worth and Southlake and Dallas and Plano there are men and women, households, families, and legacies that have been changed and are being rewritten, and I know I stand here as one man who represents one family where that's absolutely true.

I'm grateful for The Village Church, and I'm grateful for what you have done and are doing in and among us as a people. We're grateful for Matt, who has faithfully led us through hardships, through good times, through challenging times, that he has stood behind this pulpit, or music stand, and he has faithfully brought us the Word.

I'm grateful that we're a people who want to feed on your Word, as you've revealed yourself to us in your Scriptures, that Matt has been the one who primarily has stood here and heralded to us the good news that the Savior is born; he has come, and he has come to take away the sins of the world. God, we're a deeply grateful people.

I pray that even now, as he stands here with a tender heart and a full heart, that it would overflow yet again and he would step into this space, which he has done week after week, year after year, and preach the Word to us. I pray for him, that you would care for him, that you would uphold him, that you would sustain him and give him strength, and I pray that this weekend is a marker milestone in his life and in the life of his family that's a good reminder of how good and kind you've been to him. Bless him we pray. In Christ's name, amen.

Matt Chandler: Well, it has been a bit overwhelming for me. I feel like there are so many other men and women who are a part of this, who labor alongside of me, hold up my hands. Many of you...I'm looking at your faces. I oftentimes feel like the Lord has made this mistake that he has let me run with you and play with you and fight with you. I'm just grateful to the Lord for his kindness on us, on me.

It is hard for me to relate to the pastors I come across who talk about how wearying and exhausting it can be to lead and love the people of God. You have, for 15 years of highs and lows, made it such a pleasure to make much of Jesus alongside of you and with you. This is an uncomfortable space for me. My go-to is either to use humor here or to deflect to Jesus. Just know... Thank you. I love serving the Lord with you.

If the Lord answers our prayers, this is my first and last pastorate; that you are mine and I am yours, and let's just see. We came here 15 years ago just going, "What would the Lord do if for 40 years we just got in it together and hung in there and just saw what the Lord might do?" I'm eager to see what the Lord might do, and I'm eager to preach Isaiah 2 to you this morning. So if you have your Bibles, will you go ahead and grab those? Isaiah, chapter 2.

There has been a debate raging among not just Christians but all peoples for about 200 years, and the debate is theological in nature, although nobody ever really wants to talk about the theological underpinnings of the argument. The argument is...*When are you allowed to start listening to Christmas music?* There's deep division among the people of God and among the peoples of the earth about this question.

Are you allowed to listen to Christmas music whenever you want or should you give Thanksgiving its space? This is a debate. Notice I would not have brought this up a couple of weeks ago. We're in a series of transition, and I'm not trying to sow seeds of discord in the middle of that. There are people who are like, "You know what? Jesus put on flesh and dwelt among us, and I'll celebrate that whenever I want."

Then there are people who go, "No, no, no. We hear your heart in that. We appreciate that, but don't disrespect Thanksgiving. The Bible commands us to be thankful, so don't steal from Thanksgiving what is Thanksgiving's." It wages on for hundreds of years. So I thought, just so you would never guess or wouldn't have to worry about where your pastor stands... I know this might shrink the church. I am a "Let it play" brother.

Just so you know, our lights were up before Thanksgiving, because if we're going through that kind of trouble we're going to let it shine. The light of Christ shines year round, so we might even join him. So our lights have been up, and we will occasionally throughout the year play Christmas music with no disrespect intended for Thanksgiving. We're just that kind of people.

I love this time of the year. I love the wonderment it creates in my children. This has so many memories for me. Memories of coming here, memories of getting sick, memories of God's grace on my life. This season just sends me into this weird introspective... It forces me into my introvert, and there's not much of him. Just to think about this season and what we, as the people of God, are celebrating.

I want to draw your attention to something here. This season carries with it the echo of eternity. Here's what I mean by that. The branding around and the celebration of this season makes no sense unless there's some sort of reverberation deep in the souls of men and women that draws them to celebration. Let's just talk about, if we could (the Bible is here; we're going to get to it), the marketing and branding of Christmas. It doesn't quite make sense.

We're celebrating winter, yet the narrative, the branding, the marketing of Christmas is...what? From dark to light, lost to found, broken to fixed, fractured to reconciliation. Everything about this season carries the story of dark to light. Buddy the Elf? Dark to light. Red Ryder BB gun? Dark to light. Scrooge? Dark to light.

What does that have to do with winter? Winter is not about dark to light; it's about light to dark. The natural phenomenon of winter is not dark to light; it's light to dark, yet in this season throughout the world people celebrate winter. That's not what *we're* celebrating. That's what people celebrate. There's this reverberation of eternity that causes humankind all over the world to need to celebrate something right now.

So what I thought we could do is remind ourselves of our story and then in a remembrance of that story be encouraged to think differently about the next three or four weeks. We've been talking a lot about the Christian story, the story we find our lives in, the only true story there is. Where we are in the story, as we enter Isaiah 2, is this place: God has created the world in such a way that it was said of the man and woman that they were naked and unashamed.

I say this all the time, because I want it to pop into your head often. "Naked and unashamed" has very little to do with nudity and everything to do with the state of the human heart. How God designed us, how God made us was that we would never need to hide and we lacked the capacity to experience shame.

Think about what that must be like to never feel shame, to lack the capacity to feel shame. People feel shame even when they don't do anything wrong. Shame is this violent viral disease that rots out the souls of men and women. God's design is naked and unashamed. Then sin enters the cosmos and fractures that, and what happens? Naked and unashamed turns into fully clothed with layers and full of shame.

This chaos, this brokenness begins to pervade humankind, begins to pervade relationships between men and women, between humankind and God, and you have this train wreck of a reality, and yet it's into that train wreck the promises of God begin to go out as a refrain that there is a day coming when things will be made new, where brokenness will be made whole.

There will be a day that you get that Red Ryder BB gun. There will be this day, Buddy, where you get to meet your dad and you live happily ever after. There will be this day that you wake up and

you wonder what time it is and it's not too late to buy the Christmas goose. The family *is* going to come together. Relationships *will* be restored and reconciled. Diseases *will* be cured. There's this day coming, and these promises begin to echo throughout humankind.

Unbeknownst to many people, that echo has caught us up, and we don't know what to do with it unless we've lined our lives up with Jesus Christ. So cut down the tree, and let's get married. The branding and marketing of this season, unbeknownst to those who are really in it for a dollar, has its roots in the hope of a Messiah coming to fix what is broken.

Let me show you one of those promises in Isaiah 2:1-5. I don't know if you've spent time in the book of Isaiah. The first 10 to 16 chapters are not really bright lights of encouragement. Just a lot of pronouncement of judgment, a lot of pronouncement of destruction. He just starts walking through the nations of the earth and pronouncing brutal destruction over them, and yet in the middle of those pronouncements of judgment we read this:

"The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD."

In the midst of this brokenness, in the midst of this hopelessness, in the midst of a world that is receiving from Isaiah pronouncements of judgment, you get this pinprick of light that erupts in the darkness, and you get these promises that God is making through the prophet Isaiah. Some of it we're going to need to put in its context.

The first thing you see here, specifically in verse 2, is he's talking about the elevation of the house of the Lord as opposed to where it currently sat. Let me try to explain the context. Jerusalem was not

built on the pinnacle, or the apex, of that area of the world. The Mount of Olives to the east is much higher than where Jerusalem was settled.

So in ancient Near East mindset, the higher the mountain, the closer you were to heaven, the more powerful your god, which is why if you read the Old Testament, when the people of God repent they almost always go to what the Bible calls the *high places* to tear down idols, to tear down Asherah poles, because their understanding was the higher you could get, the closer you got to heaven.

You might think, "Man, how backward and foolish was that?" but was it not even when the Russians put a man in space all of those years ago...? Do you remember the first sentence he radioed back to earth? "I have made it to space, and there is no God." This didn't stop 1,000 years ago. Just 60 years ago this kind of nonsense was still communicated.

He's saying to the people of Israel and Judah, to the people of God, "God is going to do something. He's going to do something huge, and when he does it's going to reorient the elevation of glory. It is going to reorient the human understanding of what is most glorious, what is most true, and what is most beautiful." In this day, the people of God are nominal at best.

They are much more trusting in their own abilities than they are the goodness and glory of God. They glory in, rejoice in, and worship the work of their own hands and a faux safety they think they've purchased via military might and wealth. Does that sound familiar? Maybe not, but it sounds familiar to me. How do I know that? Well, look at verse 7. (You're asking the right questions. I feel like we're with each other today.)

"Their land is filled with silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land is filled with horses, and there is no end to their chariots. Their land is filled with idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made." Do you see the accusation? Humankind, his own people, are worshiping, are ascribing glory to the work of their own hands rather than where glory is due; namely, the Creator of all things.

The prophet Isaiah is speaking the words of God to the people of God, that God is going to do something that reorients, that violently, if you think about how mountains would move and how one would lower and one would elevate past... He's going to violently shift man's perspective on what is true and what is false in the coming of this Messiah.

We talked last week about the false stories we're prone to give ourselves over to, to believe in, and if we think about that in light of what we're reading in this text about the mountain of the house of the Lord being elevated above all, that there's going to be this pinnacle now that reorients the peoples of the earth... What happens in the coming of Jesus Christ is he exposes the other stories as false.

At the coming of Jesus Christ we see that consumerism is incompatible with a satisfied soul. Jesus exposes it. He comes and brings teaching and life, and he's the embodiment of the fulfillment of the law. He reveals to us that more stuff will not fix what's broken in us and that the story of secularism is false and the story of pluralism (that all things are equally true) is false and that nationalism is false and individualism is false, and on and on and on.

The apex, the pinnacle, of God's glory explodes out of the earth in the coming of the Son of God, and here's what the prophet Isaiah is talking about: there's going to be a mountain, and it's going to make all other mountains look tiny. Then from there, in this reordering of glory, you see this fascinating thing happen. Look at verse 3.

"...and many peoples shall come, and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

Here's what you have happening, if we could just follow this as a line of thought in the prophet Isaiah's pen from the heart of God.

There will be an apex, a pinnacle, elevated among humankind, so that the peoples, the people groups of the earth, see it, see the beauty of it, see how all of their other narratives have been revealed as false, and they'll want to know what's going on in Zion. They're going to come toward Zion and say, like the text says, "What's going on here? We want to come. We want to learn. We want to hear. We want to submit."

This goes back to the missional heart of God for the ends of the earth. This is why we are not a country club. That's not what God has called us to do. We've been called to him and we've been sent out, and it's in this text that celebrates the coming of Jesus as a future event. How do I know that? Because he's talking about how the law shapes us as the people of God. Let's chat about what's distinctively different about us, as Christians, than the rest of the world.

There are three primary things that we can look offensive or beautiful to the world. Let me walk through them. Here are our big three. There are a lot more, but let me just go through the big three. The way Christians view sex, the way Christians view money, and the way Christians view power have always, throughout human history, since the birth of the people of God, stood in contrast to the way the world sees those three things. Let's talk through each of those rather quickly.

First, sex. We believe God created sex and that sex is good. It is not dirty. It is not unclean. It is a good gift of God. It is a dangerous thing when not used as God has given it, and there have been parameters set for our protection and our pleasure. In God's good design for sex it operates in the confines of marriage where a woman is safe, protected, valued, and cherished. She is never consumed. She is never used. Her soul is cherished, and within the confines of marriage sex is both pleasure and intimacy-building, and it's a good gift of God.

The world would chalk it up as a mere physical act. I think the heartbreak of the season we're in right now is a fruit of the hyper-pornographic day and age in which we live, where young boys very early on (I'm not trying to excuse anybody's behavior here) begin to see women as something to be consumed rather than something to be valued, and this is what you get. It's crazy. It seems like we weren't prudes in the 50s. It seems like maybe we had something. Maybe Ward Cleaver saw some things. We see it differently than the world. It makes us strange.

We see our power differently. We see our power has been given to us by God to serve others, not to further exalt ourselves. Here's God's economy. This is what makes us so weird. "Oh, you're super, super gifted? Great. Take the very last parking space at the end of the lot. You're really godly? Okay, great. You get to sit in that weird seat behind the pole where you can't quite see the stage. This is what you get, O man of God, O woman of God."

When it comes to money... You know the text, "God loves a cheerful giver"? You don't care about Greek, but let's talk. The word there is *hilaros*. It's where we get our word *hilarious*. It's this picture of a madman, giving away... God loves that heart. "This is all his; I'm going to give it." That's not building bigger barns. That's not stockpiling wealth just in case we live to be 120. I'm not knocking 403(b). I'm not knocking that stuff. I'm just saying the people of God are hilariously generous.

This makes us an odd people. When the peoples of the earth see the apex of God's glory that created this path we begin to walk on... People see it and go, "That's amazing" or "That's repulsive." In *this* text, the promise of God through Isaiah is that the peoples of the earth will see this and go, "What's

going on in Zion?" Let me encourage you. You are the "peoples" in this text. You are not Judean. You are not in this little part of the world that's receiving this word.

This is pre-Rome. This is not you in regard to you being from this... We are the peoples who saw the pinnacle of God's glory. Someone walked on the path of God's grace according to the Word of God, and we saw it and smelt it and something was attractive about it, and we stepped into it by the grace of God. I don't have to wonder if this is true, because we're in this room in Dallas. I don't have to wonder if what Isaiah said is true, because here we are.

Then what's this path going to bring? Peace. Look at verse 4. **"He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."** Here's where I think things get a little bit more cloudy and we need to do a little bit of work.

He's saying the Messiah is coming. The mountain of the Lord. The glory of God will be seen as the apex, and other stories will be seen as false, and the peoples of the earth are going to be drawn to Zion. "What's going on in Zion?" Then he says the Messiah is going to reign and rule in such a way that there's no more war, there's no more violence, there's no more death. In fact, people won't even train for war.

He sends out this promise that all the energy and all the effort and all the sweat and all the money and all the steel that goes toward making war will be given over to cultivating life. In 2017, I can look at the first part of this... Okay, there's the apex of Christ coming, the glory of God. We have the law and Christ as the embodiment of the law showing us the way of life, what it looks like to be a Spirit-filled man in our day and age, what it looks like to walk in obedience to the Father through the power of the Spirit, and I've seen the peoples of the earth come to hear this.

All over the world today people are doing this. We have a group of women headed to Berlin this afternoon because God is doing this all over the place in Berlin, specifically among Muslim refugees in Berlin. The Spirit of God is doing insane, crazy, soul-stirring, soul-saving, gospel power in Berlin, and some of our ladies just want to go play. If I see God doing... *I* want to play. God can't fail, so if he's going to save and heal and work, I just want to be on the field.

Then I read *this*. I think we're not quite here yet. It seems to me that we're actually doing pretty well at training for war and going to war. Not just us. It seems like all over the world we're still doing this one pretty well. So what do we do when it looks like a messianic prophecy over-promises and under-delivers? What do you do when that happens? You're looking at me like I'm a heretic. I'm just asking the question.

Are you looking around going, "Isaiah nailed it. There are no tanks and no predator drones and no missiles, because all of that stuff has been turned into gardening equipment"? You can send me that email, and I'll send you some links. It's just not where we are. So what are we to do with this? Well, again... (Here's my sermon. Don't panic. Yes, all of that was intro.)

You and I are in this period of time that theologians call the *already but not yet*. Others have called it the *space between*, but I like the *already but not yet*. When theologians talk that way, here's what they're trying to communicate. The things Isaiah has said are coming in Jesus... You and I have experienced some of the "alreadyness" of what Christ has done for us, and I know that because we're here.

Even this week, the *already* has been everywhere around me. Let me give you a couple of examples of that. Two men I deeply love have older wayward children. They just have not wanted to love Jesus, have not wanted to surrender their lives to him, and this has been, as you can imagine, a pain point in their souls. They have actively prayed and asked the Lord and pled with the Lord and pled with the Lord as it seemed their kids grew colder and colder and colder to the Lord.

Yet in the last 10 days, both of those children have made professions of faith in Jesus Christ. What is that? That's the *already*. Is it not? That is apex, pinnacle, other stories being a lie, and the path to life, and someone saying, "I'll step into that." If you were here Wednesday night at Recovery, then you were blessed to hear one of my favorite testimonies recently at The Village Church, where we had an affair that occurred, with all of the heartbreak and brokenness that adultery brings.

In the middle of hurt and betrayal and brokenness and two families on the precipice of disintegration, darkness started turning to light, and the Spirit of God began to work in the hearts of the two women first and their husbands. Those marriages stayed together, and then as you can imagine... I'm never going to sugarcoat anything. A lot of difficulty and strife, a lot of mistrust. A little bit of "Where are you going? Keep your phone on." As you can only imagine, as you mourn that, as you get angry in that...

As all of that was going on, the Spirit of God was slowly working, moving, encouraging, until one of the women approached the other woman and extended forgiveness, and one of the husbands went to the other husband and asked for forgiveness, and the other husband extended that forgiveness, and reconciliation occurred, not just between those husbands and their wives but then those couples as they surrendered their lives more fully to Jesus Christ, and they're in active lay ministry now at this church, loving and encouraging others who have found themselves on the painful edge of that sword. That's the *already*, and it's here.

You have your story of *already*. I have my story of *already*. We are a people who have experienced this part of the text. We've experienced it. We saw in the gospel of Jesus Christ the apex of God's glory that shone so brightly it put a shadow on our other pursuits, and then we came, and by the grace of God and the power of the Spirit of God we've been lining our lives up with the heart of God in his Word, and we're beginning to grow and be transformed by the power of God. We're not perfect; we're in process, but we've seen it, and we're walking and growing and peace is being established, slowly but surely.

Then there's the *not yet*. In the same way that this week has been filled with *already*s, it has also been filled with *not yet*s. A very faithful servant of God at this church, at this campus in particular, who sets up this room to make sure... Every week he and his team come in, and just to help you watch what your kids write on those little cards... We get to read those during the week. It's usually wildly entertaining.

They come and reset this thing, and he learned he has colon cancer just a couple of days after his mom died. That's the *not yet*. I'm praying and hoping and believing God is going to heal him, but that's a *not yet* moment. That's not an *already* moment. These two 20- or 30-year-olds who gave their lives to Jesus Christ this past week still get progressive sanctification, which the apostle Paul describes as toiling and striving. These couples that have been reconciled still are going to live life with highs and lows, losses and wins.

Even as I was preaching this sermon last night, I walked off the stage at the 7:15, walked back, and waiting for me in my green room was a call to let me know that one of our members down in Dallas... Their 15-month-old fell into the pool last night and needed to be revived. Right now we're not sure what's going to happen and what kind of damage has been done or what the long-term prognosis is. Man, you want to talk about just getting punched in the face by the *not yet*. There it is.

This is the tension you and I are living in. All of the promises of God have found their *yes* in Jesus Christ, and you and I, walking in light, walking in life, full of the Holy Spirit, being ushered into his goodness and grace, still find ourselves in the space between. Here's one of my favorite things on the *not yet*. This is the apostle Paul. It's beautiful, and it doesn't make a lot of sense.

Philippians 3:12-16: **"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do..."** Here's how you know he's a preacher. He's saying "one thing" then he preaches four.

"...forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained."

Here's what I mean by this doesn't make sense. I think emotionally you've experienced this when it comes to your relationship with the Lord. "I've obtained it, but I don't have it. I'm chasing it, but I already possess it." Do you feel it? That's the already but not yet. Christ has given birth to peace, and yet I'm hungry for more peace. God has saved my soul, and yet I find an angsty longing in me for more of what I already possess. Maybe that's too much, but let me give you a very well-known theologian and how he put it.

But I still haven't found what I'm looking for
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.

I believe when the kingdom comes
Then all the colors will bleed into one
Bleed into one.

Do you hear what Bono is saying? If you go back and read the lyrics to that, he's like, "I've tasted it, I've got it, I know it, but I want it." This is the already but not yet. This is the space between. So how are we to live in it? Let me talk a little bit about that. This is Revelation 21:3-6. I would encourage you to put this to memory, as I think it will encourage your heart.

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.' And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this down...'"

I love that, because you have to wonder what John's face looks like as he's being told this by the Lord. Almost everybody he's known has been killed or put in prison. The church is so fragile. John himself has been boiled alive. He didn't die. It freaked them out, so they exiled him on Patmos. Here Jesus is showing up and going, "There's not going to be any pain. Nobody is going to die. There are going to be no more tears. There will be no suffering at all.

Okay, write this down. These words are true. You're going to tweak this and be like, "There's going to be some..." No, there's none." By what authority can we believe in this? Well, that's why he wants him to write. **"Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.' And he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.'"**

What does it look like to live in the space between? Well, Isaiah, when he's unpacking these ideas to us, says this. Look at verse 5. **"O house of Jacob [O people of God], come, let us walk in the light of the LORD."** You and I are 48 minutes closer to the skies opening up and the return of Jesus, not as a baby in a manger but as the reigning, supreme, sovereign King of everything forever. What happens, because here we are 2,000 years-plus after... We have drifted off to sleep.

This is why even in Jesus' teaching he reminds us, "Hey, stay awake. Stay awake. You need to stay awake. You don't need to be like these virgins who weren't prepared. You don't need to be like this group that wasn't prepared for the coming of the King. No, you need to be awake, you need to be alert, you need to be walking in the light, because at any moment he could come and tear open the sky, and there will be no place to hide, so walk in the light. Come, and walk in the light of the Lord." To cultivate a longing.

I'm tired of getting those kinds of calls. I get them every week. If you're not looking at not just the Western world but the *world* and seeing how broken and crazy it is... The Western world especially seems to have lost its mind. I feel like we're stuck in a *Saturday Night Live* sketch we can't get out of.

Like, you can't turn the channel. It's like every channel it's that terrible sketch. Yet here we are. Our hope isn't in politicians and nationalism; our hope is that this reigning King of Glory has revealed that all other stories are false. We want to come to him, lay our yes down, and start to walk in the light.

I do not know of a safer place in town for you to not be okay. How much of your energy is going into projecting that you're doing awesome? Think about it. How much of the capacity God has given you for joy, for life, for laughter is instead going into managing your false persona? Why would you do that to yourself? He has already outed you on the cross. We talk about this all the time. Think of all of that energy being freed up to worship, to love your spouse, to be glad in the lives of your children, to rejoice in your singleness, to worship in unfettered ways.

Do you know why I think many of you struggle with all of that? Because so much of the energy that's meant for your vitality is going into pretending that you're not wrestling with some doubts right now, that you don't even have a desire to follow the Lord, that you have some addiction you don't want to talk about...you've given yourself over to pornography or you have a little bit of a drug problem, whether that's prescription drugs or something else...that work is a train wreck, and you don't know how you're going to get out of it.

Your marriage is always humming like it's going to crumble at any moment, but you'll come to Home Group holding hands, despite the fact that there were some obscenities in the car...not *you*, but somebody...where you're really tearing each other down until public, and then... It's so dumb. That's not what Christ has for you. Do you know what he has for you? Light. I'm not saying there's not pain walking through the light. When you've been in darkness... You know. It takes a bit to get your bearings. This is what God has for you.

So here we are in 2017, already but not yet, waiting for the second coming, longing, groaning, wanting. I don't know about you. Maranatha. Come, Lord Jesus. I'm weary from the heartbreak of the world, but the King of Glory says we're now 53 minutes closer to all things being new and having removed from us by the blood of Jesus the capacity for mourning, crying, suffering, pain, and loss. We're eager for his return. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for these men and women. Thank you for today, the truth of your Word. I thank you that we're closer. I pray that you would make us watchful, that we would, as the Scripture says, hasten the day of the Lord. Where we have been lulled to sleep, Father, will you wake us up?

I pray for my brothers and sisters in this room who in this moment are in a heightened season of *not yet*, where, Father, either relationally or physically or some other thing happening has really wrung out of them their hope, wrung out of them their joy. I pray, Holy Spirit, that you would minister to them in a unique way during this next part of our service, that you would encourage and cultivate in them confidence that you are able. We love you. It's for your beautiful name, amen.

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