

# The Colors of Joy (Red)

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, are we there? All right, well good morning church. You guys did well. Well I do want to welcome you and love that we get together and have just a few weeks before Christmas.

! As you can tell, we're celebrating already. We're doing it. And this month we will be going through a series entitled The Colors of Joy.

And try to explain that a bit as we get into the message. It's a little different. Typically we go through a passage or a book of the Bible and we teach it through expositionally.

So this is a little divergent for us that we're doing a topical series. But I know for some of you it will create a little cognitive dissonance. But just hang on. We'll get to January and we'll get back into 1 Peter. Okay?

So, taking a little pause here to kind of focus on the season and what it represents. So, would you join me? Let's pray. Lord, we're reminded of the words of Isaiah 700 years prior to you to the incarnation.

[ 1 : 27 ] Where he writes, the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shown. And because of your entrance into our time and space, Jesus, and living a perfect life and then dying a death for the forgiveness of sins, we are people that walk in light.

And we're thankful to be here this morning. We're thankful to gather, to center our affections on you, Jesus, to worship you, to be reminded of the truth that you have claimed over our lives.

And I pray that we would be people to remind one another, even today, of your promises. So, would you use this series for our edification, for your glory?

I ask Jesus that you would meet with us today. That you would be at work through the power of your word and your spirit. And Lord, that you would give us something today that we could take with us, not only for today, but for a lifetime.

We pray all of this in Jesus' name and all God's people said. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, the Christmas season has arrived, if you couldn't tell.

[ 2 : 45 ] And perhaps for some of you, you kind of feel like the season has been thrust upon you. Right? There's a lot to do. There's lights to hang and trees to set up and decorate.

And there's boxes. And there's boxes. And if you're like my family, boxes and boxes and boxes of decorations to pull from storage and to find space for.

Ornaments to hang. Ornaments to rehang if you have small children. Or if you're like us and you have doodles with waggy tails, you will be rehang them as well.

Functions to attend. Christmas letters that turn into New Year's letters to write. Fruitcakes, perhaps to avoid. UPS, FedEx drivers to encourage.

Family in-laws to entertain. Cookies to bake. Meals to prepare. And it all sounds so very wonderful and exhausting at the same time. And so this month, leading up to Christmas, I put together a series entitled The Colors of Joy.

[ 3 : 53 ] And my intent behind the series is really to serve you this month. Often our hearts, I think, can unknowingly dry up under the pace of our traditions and festivities.

And simply just basking in the wonderful spirit of the holidays. I think sometimes our time with Jesus can diminish. We gave out these Advent books to hopefully help us to draw near daily to him.

But we can struggle during the holidays. It's just the hustle and the bustle. And so my gift to us this season is to give you four promises from God that are really for your joy.

And to help you remember these promises this month, I have attached them each to four colors of the season.

We're getting a little creative here. I'm so sorry, Scott. I know. Red, white, green, and gold. And my hope is that when you observe these colors, even as you're out and about, that it will cause your mind to stir, to be directed towards remembering a promise God has made to you.

[ 5 : 17 ] I think it's interesting that God created the world in colors. We don't live in shades of gray. God gave us colors. They're part of God's visual language.

Don't go too far with that. Primarily, he says, I exist. But certainly, he speaks. Psalm 19.1 says, the heavens declare the glory of God and the sky, we could say the blue sky above, proclaims his handiwork.

We know that colors evoke emotion. The beautiful sunset of brilliant reds and oranges and yellows and pinks. Or the blue waters with a tropical coral reef and all the kaleidoscope of colorful sea life that inhabits that.

And so, God reminds us through his creation and the colors that have been painted on his creation that he exists. And so, I'm just saying all of that up front for some of you who are being maybe alarmed that Pastor Jay is going off the rails this month, obsessing about colors.

I'm simply using colors as a teaching aid to remind us of four promises that you should be desperate to carry with you for a lifetime.

[ 6 : 29 ] All of us are in what I call a story war. What do we believe is true about ourselves and our God today? The stories we tell ourselves impacts our joy.

Think about the story that the disciples were telling themselves on the Friday that Jesus is crucified. The story was we've lost. It's over. We're done. And it had profound effect upon their joy.

Nothing will infuse more joy in your heart than promises made by a promise-keeping God. Amen? Amen? So, this is really the best gift that I can give to you this Christmas.

God's promises. Church, their life. And just full disclosure, this is a series I taught.

I preached a decade ago. And it was in the midst of the worst season of life. I thought my days were few. And it's interesting to be a preacher of God's word and to prepare sermons all the while you believe you have a terminal illness.

[ 7 : 42 ] And so, I put the series together, I think mainly as a gift to my family and a gift to my church at the time.

And I figured the best thing that I can give you as a shepherd, as a dad, is God's promise, as a husband, as God's promises. So, that's out of the way.

I am desperate for God's promises to carry them. Let me give you a little preview of Christmas green in two weeks.

This is one I hold tightly, Isaiah 41, 13. Some of you love this promise. Some of you are like, I've never thought about God's promises. Well, now's the time. And you can carry this one today and this month.

The prophet Isaiah says here, he writes, For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand. It is I who say to you, fear not. I am the one who helps you.

[ 8 : 45 ] Friends, if you believe that to be true every day, it changes everything. Amen? God says, fear not. I am with you. That's a promise from your God specifically to you.

And so, we're going to get in and I hope that you will leave this series going, Man, I've got four promises I can take with me and carry with me really for a lifetime.

All right? Well, let's get into Christmas, talking a little bit about it. I have some awkward news for some of you. And maybe the first bit of news I should share is that Jesus may not actually have been born on December 25th.

I know. I know. Hopefully, I didn't just ruin Christmas for you. A little history here.

For the first three centuries of the church, there is no mention of Christmas. I know. It's like Narnia, right?

[ 9 : 54 ] It's always winter, never Christmas. For the first three centuries of the church. The first Christmas celebrated, or celebration on record, was from the mid-4th century A.D.

Bishop of Rome, Julius I, was the first to declare December 25th as the date for the holiday. And at the time, we know that December 25th was the darkest day of the year in the then-used Julian calendar.

It's a perfect day to celebrate the verse that I shared during the prayer from Isaiah 9, that those in darkness have seen a great light. Now, that said, prior to the institution of officially Christmas by the church, a century before Julius I, there is a Christian named Sextus Julius Africanus, who

suggested that March 25th is the date of Christ's Immaculate Conception.

And then nine months later, do the math, his birth would have been December 25th. So this idea was sort of swirling around out there. Of course, we don't know how he came up with this date, March 25th.

It is another fitting day, given that there were Christians at that time who dated the creation of the world to March 25th. We have no idea. So December celebration of Christ's birth may have flowed in part from that supposed date.

[11:20] We don't know. And I think the challenges as we come to Scripture, I don't think we can be dogmatic on December 25th as the actual day that Christ was born.

And I think, in fact, the biblical record leans against that date as Incarnation Day. And so let's start here in Luke. I know we're just going to be kind of jumping around, not tethered to just one passage because it's a topical sermon.

But Luke 2, verse 8, Luke writes this, In the same region there were shepherds out in the field keeping watch over their flock by night.

Now ancient Jewish custom of shepherds was to send their flocks out into the field during the spring until the rains of autumn. During the months of May through October.

Hence the incarnation of Jesus may have occurred actually in the springtime or maybe in the fall. We don't actually know.

[12:29] And so for some of you going, well, well, then how did we get to December 25th? And maybe you've heard that there were other festivals and holidays happening that same time of the year.

And you're wondering, you know, is Christmas just a ripoff of an ancient pagan holiday? Right? I've heard about other ancient winter festivals during this time that have nothing to do with Jesus. Ancient Germans, they worshipped the god Thor, not the Marvel character, who lived in a tree. Or the Asherah cult of the Canaanites that worshipped trees and brought them into their homes. They even decorated them. Or how about the festival most often associated with the origins of Christmas?

The ancient Romans celebrating Saturnalia. The festival given to the worship of the Roman god Saturn. And the worship of the sun during the winter solstice.

[13:34] There are some believers, even today, that avoid Christmas because of these reasons. If you can believe it. In fact, the celebration of Christmas was banned by law in Massachusetts in the colonial days of our forefathers.

There's a lot of Puritan influence there. It's got to be bad. It's the ripoff of another holiday. Let me be clear this morning, church. Christmas is not a pagan celebration, regardless of the actual date of Christ's birth.

Christmas originated in the church during the 4th century and was instituted to look back to an actual historical event where we celebrate the birth of our Savior, regardless of the date in which that occurred.

Now, it may be that December 25th is simply the day chosen by the early church to celebrate the birth of Christ in order to move the affections of Christians away from pagan celebrations, godless celebrations, to the worship of the living God.

And so, you can think of it as it's sort of evangelistic in nature for our worship to move people from a lie to the source of truth and life.

[15:04] Augustine, in the 4th century, he said it this way, We hold this day, December 25th, holy, not like the pagans because of the birth of the Son, S-U-N, but because of Him who made it.

Isn't that good? And I would say the central issue for us believers related to Christmas, it always has to do with what do we decide to make of the content of this holiday, knowing that maybe some of the traditions have morphed from pagan practices.

And so, we have to ask the question, Are we committed to the initial meaning of a day, or can we redeem something and hold to its new meaning and be good with this?

We do this with words. English is very fluid, as we know. The word nice, for instance, back in the 13th century, it actually meant stupid, or dumb, or foolish.

So, if somebody comes up and says, Man, I think you're so nice in a 13th century sort of manner, take offense.

[16:27] Christmas trees, lights, they're neither endorsed nor prohibited within Scripture. You have freedom. Some of these things started out as pagan practices, but today they don't mean the same thing.

We'll get to that when we get to some of the other colors. Some of these things are simply family traditions associated with good memories. Others represent things that I think we can redeem and utilize in worship.

I think something that, you know, if it meant something 700 years or 1,000 years ago, it's inconsequential today, if infused with new meaning that honors the living God. Amen?

I think me bringing a tree into the house has nothing to do with Thor or me worshiping nature.

Okay? And I think we have an example of redeeming practices or symbols.

God even did that, right, with the cross. I think that's the ultimate example of redeeming a symbol.

The cross, an instrument of death, it symbolizes brutality, but for Christians, it's what?

[17:31] For us, it's a symbol of life. God even took the pagan symbol of circumcision practiced by the Egyptians and redeemed it for Abraham and infused new meaning into it as a way for God's ancient people to worship him.

And so we have to ask the question, culturally today, as our cities celebrate Christmas, I mean, are they thinking about Thor? Are they thinking about Saturn, Mithras, Asherah?

No, they've, in fact, they've not even redeemed it because now they're thinking Santa Claus and shopping and gifts and buying stuff and parties, consumerism, right?

Is Christmas more Christian today than it was in ancient times? Not really. And so as believers, as followers of Christ, we have a choice of where our affections will be directed through this season.

And so my aim, let's repurpose elements of the season. Let's just take, we'll start with the colors this year, okay? Right?

[18:39] The colors of the season. Let's baptize our imagination so as we see the colors, they remind us, they stir something within us of promises that God intends for us to carry for the rest of our lives.

And so my gift essentially to us is this mental treasure chest of gospel promises indexed by color. There's a lot of creativity happening here behind the pulpit today, Scott. I'm just, I'm using it all up.

All right. This morning we're going to consider the seasonal color of red. The promise of red. And I want us to hear the promise.

It's a two-part promise. And it's just this. My love is vast and I will return. That's the promise the Lord has made to us.

[19:41] My love is vast for you. Hear his voice and I will return. Let's consider the first part of this promise.

My love is vast. Hebrews 9. Let me read verse 22 and then we'll read a few more down below.

But writer of Hebrew pens this. Indeed, under the law, almost everything is purified with blood.

That's kind of an interesting statement. Almost everything. And I think you have actually here sort of a concession leaving room for the provision for the poor back in the day with the Mosaic Law.

Right? If they couldn't afford an animal to shed blood they could bring an offering of flour. It talks about that in Leviticus 5. So I think there's just that's what that statement refers to. Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood.

[20:41] And without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. So Hebrews 9, this chapter, it compares the old way with the perfect way.

The old system with the perfect system. So when Jesus enters our time and space there's an upgrade to the old system that was about to occur.

The old Mosaic Law required an animal sacrifice to temporarily, imperfectly cover for sins committed.

But all of that, right, 1,500 years of that was preparing mankind for the perfect that would enter our world on, as we now celebrate Christmas Day.

The spotless lamb who lived a sinless life so that he could shed his red blood once for sins committed.

[21:47] in Hebrews 9 going down to verse 24, continuing this thought, the author writes, for Christ has entered not into holy places made with hands which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly as the high priest entered the holy places every year with blood not his own. Red.

You see it everywhere during this season. In gifts, in poissettas, in ribbons, in holly berries, it's everywhere. everywhere. And it should stir in us, it should remind us of the blood of Christ, that he offered his own blood once for the payment of sins committed to anyone who would cry out to him in this life.

It's for anyone. It's free. I drove a gal two nights ago. I'm an Uber pastor on the side and I had a chance to interact with this college student who just converted, she said, to Islam.

I said, oh. I actually asked this, I mean, it just, it caught me. I'm like, why do you want to do that? Like, that was my initial question.

[ 23 : 24 ] She was very gracious and interacted with me and I said, man, you know, I know Islam talks about Jesus as a prophet, but the Bible tells us that he's actually God.

And then I actually had an Advent book for her and I said, this book is going to go through the prophecies that are going to direct you towards who Jesus actually is. And she was very thrilled to have it, but I said, man, he died for you.

He died for you. He's God. His death means something because of who he is. the payment for sins committed to anyone who would cry out to him in this life.

Church, that is a love that is vast. And I think the scandal is that Jesus wasn't just the priest, he was also the sacrifice.

His love is vast. It's immeasurable. It's extravagant. words fail as we fumble to express the otherworldliness of God's love expressed in the spilled blood of Jesus.

[ 24 : 35 ] I mean, even in his agony as Jesus is dying on the cross, what does he say? He says, Father, forgive them. My love is so vast they don't know what they're doing.

friends, no one will ever love you better in this life than Jesus. Not your mom, not your dad, not a sibling.

I don't care if that human love comes in the form of a diamond ring, ladies. Jesus, his love, it's unconditional. unconditional. It's forever.

And it costs him everything to love us this way. My love is vast. So reach your hand out in faith and take that gift.

That's a promise from the Lord to you this Christmas. red is the blood of Calvary. And it is that which brings us to God.

[ 25 : 41 ] Peter says it this way, a little preview, 1 Peter 3.18, for Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit.

Christmas red is about the vast love of Jesus to rescue, to forgive, and to restore relationship. Some of you in here think you're unlovable.

That's a lie. Jesus says to you, my love is vast. To be loved like this is remarkable.

Certainly as we consider the stench of our sin prior to faith in Christ, but maybe even more remarkable when you call to mind, not that I'm suggesting you do, please don't, but maybe seasons of rebellion after having placed faith in Jesus.

And he still says, for you, my love is vast. it's bigger, it's better than words can express.

[ 27 : 08 ] Friends, that's joy. These promises are joy inducing. pain. It should floor us.

I think back a decade ago, and I don't like to go there too often, but I'm like, the Lord forgave a wayward pastor. I thought that was the last time I would preach this series.

I thought that was the last series, and the Lord's kindness ten years later, and I get to share with you. The Lord's love for us, friends, it's remarkable.

It's joy. It's promise. And this is a promise, I think, of pure joy, but guess what? The second part of this promise of Christmas red, it just keeps getting better.

Because the second part of the promise is, I don't really love you, just radically, but I'm returning. I will return. You know, Christmas as a season, yeah, it's the season of wonder, and people are trying to, oh, I need the Christmas spirit, I need to get this thing, I need to grab onto this thing.

[ 28 : 32 ] But Christmas is a season of longing. Christmas is a season actually of sadness. It's just right there below the service.

It's a season of heartache. This season will be the first Christmas for some of you without your family members. I just think about you, Carolyn, and like, you're on my heart all the time.

And Scott, we think about you, we pray about you. I have a dear friend on the west side, Tom. There's no Carla this year. Like, I just, and you have people, and maybe you are thinking about people that aren't here, and there's like this heartache, there's this weird juxtaposition of joy and sorrow in this season.

Christmas will never live up to our expectations in this life.

We will never quite get there. Your perfect Christmas will still not achieve that. Why?

[ 29 : 45 ] Why do I say this? Ostensibly because our longing for Christmas, it's actually a longing for heaven. We want the good.

We want the perfect. We want the pure joy. But it's in God's presence where there's fullness of joy. Amen? And Christmas stirs all of this up.

And I think the ephemeral joy of Christmas is merely a reminder that things are actually not the way they're supposed to be. Amen? And yet the promise of Christmas read, not that I love you, crazy do I love you, but I'm going to come back.

I will return. Jesus has promised a second Advent is coming. And the first Advent should stir this up in us.

and when he comes, when he returns, he will break all that is proud. He will deal with it. But he will also mend all that is broken.

[ 31 : 00 ] Christmas read is about the sacrifice of the perfect lamb. Part one, my love is vast, but it is also the roar of the great lion.

I will return and I will judge evil severely and I will make things right. Listen to the words of Isaiah the prophet on this matter as we consider this promise that Jesus makes to us.

I'm coming back. It's the roar of the lion here. Isaiah 63 verses 1 through 4. Isaiah writes, Who is this who comes from Edom?

Edom is a nation southeast of Jerusalem. It's a region just south. It's in modern-day Jordan. In crimson garments from Basra.

Basra was the capital of Edom. It's in modern-day Jordan as well. And remember that name. He who is splendid in his apparel, people.

[ 32 : 10 ] So we got to ask, who's this person in crimson? It's not Santa Claus. Marching in the greatness of his strength. It is I speaking in righteousness mighty to save.

Why is your apparel red and your garments like his who treads the wine press? This person, the Lord Jesus, responds, I have trodden the wine press alone.

From the people, no one was with me. I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath. Their lifeblood splattered on my garments and stained all my apparel.

For the day of vengeance was in my heart and my year of redemption has come. there's a lot going on here and it's quite severe.

You guys are never going to see Christmas red the same ever again. It's safe to say. This prophecy here in Isaiah, I believe, is pointing towards the final battle at the end of the tribulation period.

[ 33 : 28 ] where God will set up his earthly kingdom. The church is not present, I believe, if we're here, okay. I believe we're raptured.

I believe this is a time for the gospel to advance for God's ancient people, the Jews. They are hated by the nations. They are hated by the armies of the Antichrist.

God, however, cares for his ancient people uniquely during this time. We have other prophecies that speak to this. I'll give you one from Revelation 12, verse 6.

It says this, and the woman, speaking of Israel, there's a remnant of Jews here, fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God in which she is to be nourished for 1260 days.

Do the math, that's three and a half years. Midpoint of the tribulation. God has prepared a place where he will protect. In Revelation 12, if you go down to verse 14, it talks about how he provides food, he nourishes them.

[ 34 : 35 ] I think that's supernaturally. And they're there in the wilderness, they're hiding, and it says they're fleeing from the serpent, they're fleeing from the Antichrist, from Satan himself.

And it says that they're kept in a sheep pen. And so you have these prophecies in Revelation 12, you have similar in Micah 2, verse 12, talks about a remnant from Israel fleeing to a place God has prepared for her during the great tribulation.

Go back to what Isaiah said in Isaiah 63, it says in crimson garment from Basra. So the deliverer, the lion of Judah, Jesus, it says he shows up in Basra.

Where's Basra? Well, it's in Jordan. Is this the capital or is this another place? There's good reason to believe that Basra in Edom is actually the ancient civilization of the Nabataeans, Petra, if you've been to Jordan.

Because it talks about God preserving his people in a sheep pen. Basra actually means sheep pen, or Petra means sheep pen.

[ 35 : 49 ] And it may be that God is protecting his ancient people in Petra the final three and a half years of the tribulation period. And there's Bible scholars that associate these two places.

They're actually in close proximity to one another. And essentially Basra means sheepfold. It would be a perfect place for God's ancient people to flee to. The only way into Petra is a one mile narrow passageway that you have to walk to then get into this stronghold where there's these natural defenses all around you.

Thousands could hold up there and live for a period. Isn't that cool? And he says, I'm going to show up there. Well, why?

Why? Why would Jesus, when he returns, show up in Basra that may be Petra? Why does the man, why does the deliverer in red show up there?

He shows up there because that's where the Jews are hiding out. And Jesus is coming to intercept the Antichrist before he invades and destroys Israel.

[ 36 : 59 ] I think the Antichrist is marching his army south and they're getting there and just as they think, man, we're going to wipe out God's ancient people are going to wipe out the Jews. Who shows up?

The deliverer in red. And he deals with them. And I think this is just the beginning of the final battle. Just as they show up, the man in crimson intervenes.

And I think this actually is the scene that kicks off the final battle. Then it moves north to the valley of Jezreel. We know that is Armageddon. But I believe with all my heart that Jesus, as he said, I've got to prepare a place.

I'm coming back. I believe that's true. I believe he's going to return. I believe this with my whole heart that Jesus is going to return. Scott believes this with his whole heart.

In fact, we were talking about this prophecy and he's like, Jay, I've got to tell you something, but don't tell the church. I said, perfect, tell me, and then I'm going to tell you later that I'm going to tell the church. But I did ask him permission, he said, fine.

[ 37 : 59 ] But he wasn't happy about it. About 15, 20 years ago, Scott was in Petra. He knows this prophecy. So what does Scott do? He's like the responsible one. I'm just like, woo!

No, Scott's like, I'm going to get a Bible. And so he got a Bible, put it in a Ziploc bag, wrote out the gospel in it, and kind of helped people. He's like, if the Jews are going to be here in Petra, I'm taking a Bible and I'm putting it in this crack right here, so when they get here, they're going to get the gospel.

Do you love that? So good! Because we believe Jesus is actually going to return. This isn't just fanciful thinking, I'm baking my life on this, friends.

I've taught this to my kids. We're proclaiming this when we gather. Jesus is going to return for his church and then to finally vanquish evil.

It says, vengeance is mine in Romans 12, I will repay. He's going to. Church, even as our world disintegrates in unspeakable evil, in unconsolable vitriol, a second advent is promised.

[ 39 : 14 ] The man in red will return. And the garment soaked in crimson guarantee that evil will be dealt with once and for all. Amen? That's so good.

We live and serve for that day. When all the sad things and evil things will become, as it were, in Tolkien's words, untrue.

You guys had no idea that Christmas, the first advent, was so tethered to the second advent. It's part of the promise of Christmas red. It's fascinating to me that we sing joy to the world at Christmas time.

That's not a Christmas carol. I just ruined Christmas again. It's a lot of bad news this morning. I apologize. It's actually, Joy to the World is a song about the second advent, about what we were just reading about.

In fact, in 1719, Isaac Watts didn't write a Christmas carol. He wrote a poem, and he wrote it from Psalm 98. You can read that later, the last couple verses. In particular, they're talking about the king's return, his setting up his earthly kingdom.

[ 40 : 30 ] But what I love about this song is that we have sort of hijacked it for Christmas time, and we have forever tethered the advents together, the first and the second.

And just as we think about Christmas, we're reminded that Christ came 2,000 years ago. He will return someday, friends, and he will mend all that is broken.

Christmas red is about a promise to return and make all things as they ought to be. I love that. There's no more heartache. There's no more goodbyes.

Enjoy the world, we sing the words, no more let sin and sorrows grow. It's done. Nor thorns infest the ground. That should be encouraging news.

That's for your joy. And I get it, there's still heartache. But you have a promise from the Lord in Psalm 56, you know, until that day I'm going to hold your tears in a bottle.

[ 41 : 33 ] I know them, I see them, I care about them. I'm with you, my love is vast, but I'm returning. I am returning. Maranatha, church, Jesus promised to deal with evil, the evil of the wrongs, and to make all things right.

And so we'll end with this. What do we have to look forward to? In the words of Lewis from his version of the last battle, he says this, and as he spoke, he no longer looked to them like a lion. But the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us, this is the end of all stories.

And we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them, it was the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover, the title page.

Now at last they were beginning chapter one of the great story, which no one on earth has read, which goes on forever, in which every chapter is better than the one before.

[ 42 : 52 ] Friends, the promise of Christmas read, my love is vast, I am the sacrificial lamb, but I'm also going to return and you hear the roar of the lion.

Praise Jesus. Let me pray. Father, would you increase our faith, on these matters today? Lord, would you be near to the brokenhearted?

Just wash over them with your grace and your mercies today. Lord, let us revel in the fact that your love is, we're in Christ if we have trusted in your payment for our sins.

That's everything. That's forgiveness for past, present, future. future. It's done. It's been dealt with. Let us rest in that. Let that be for our joy.

But Lord, let us also be reminded that you will return, that things will not always go as they always have, but you will invade time and space yet once again, and you will make all things right.

[ 43 : 59 ] You will deal with evil, and you will set up your kingdom where righteousness dwells. Lord, we long for that. We anticipate it.

It's not fairy tale. It's not fanciful thinking. It's a promise made from you to your people. Jesus, you cannot lie, so we're resting in your promise.

Let us believe it a little bit more today because of time that we have spent together. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen.