

Rooted in Him: Awaiting Him | Revelation 1:1–8

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we are encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ. I'm Pastor Patrick Daly, and each week I balance the grace and love of Jesus Christ with the truth of the Word of God.

Today's message is rooted in Him, awaiting Him, from Revelation 1, verses 1-8. We saw that Jesus Christ, He reigns from beginning to end.

He is the Alpha and the Omega. Jesus Christ loves us. He freed us by His blood, and He made us a kingdom and priests.

One thing that I really appreciated in doing this sermon is mentioning that Christ was there even at creation. A verse that really stands out to me is John 1, verses 1-3, which mention, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

But I also think of Proverbs 8, verses 27-30, and I want to share that with you before we begin. It says in the English Standard Version, And this is an example of what we find in the connections with the Word of God.

[1 : 26] It was really an honor to be able to preach from Revelation as we are going through our 42-week series through the Book of Revelation. As we read, hear, and keep the Word, may the Word of God dwell richly within us.

And may our hope come from Him as we await for His final return. It's great to be here as we are now ready to rock and roll, ready to start in our sermon series through the Book of Revelation. This has been a long time coming. For those of you, you may have seen how we did 38 messages through the parables of Christ.

That was basically part one. We had these simplistic truths that's found in God's Word that taught something that was so deep, sometimes complex, but good for all of us to read, to study, to learn. And in going through all of the parables, I kept seeing so many connections within Revelation. And finally, the Lord laid it on my heart that, by golly, we're going to go through Revelation and go through this incredible book.

[2 : 39] It's not a scary book. I know that there's so, so often we live in this world where we think of Revelation as the book that you don't want to turn to.

The book that's scary and the book that divides people. But the reality is, Revelation, like any other book in the Bible, is important. It's important for us to read, for us to study together, for us to grow, and for us to learn from.

And like anything, it's part of the Word of God. What I'd like to invite us to do, let's open in a word of prayer, and we'll turn our Bibles to Revelation chapter 1.

We're going to go through verses 1 through 8 in Revelation. But before we begin, I'd like for us to bow our heads together and let's pray for this time together.

Father God, we thank you for this time and this opportunity for us to gather together as we are faithfully going through your Word. We pray, Father, that truth is spoken here, that we will read, that we will hear, and we will keep your Word.

[3 : 47] Read so that we can experience your Word. Hear that we can understand and keep your Word holding on to it.

We pray for transformation. We pray for healing. We pray for everyone who is here in this room and those who have tuned on online, whether on TikTok, Facebook, or whatever.

We pray, Father, that you will bless this time. We pray that as we go through Revelation, this will not be a book that divides us. But rather, this book being a part of your Word brings us not only united together as Christians who believe in your Son, Jesus Christ, but points to you, that points to your Son, and the hope that exists in Him.

May we not lose our sight on the main thing. That salvation that comes from you, balancing the grace and truth. May we grow individually and together.

Be with us in this time and in this place. It is in the name of Jesus that we pray and we all say together, Amen. So let's turn our Bibles to the book of Revelation. We're going to go to the first eight verses in here.

[5 : 05] You are free to use your ESVP Bible that is on page 1218. Or your Bible of choice, King James, New Living Translation, New International, or whatever one you prefer.

So I'll give you a moment here. All right, are we all there?

Pretty much all there? Okay. So, Revelation, verse 1. Let's read it together, church. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy.

John, to the seven churches that are in Asia.

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come. And from the seven spirits who are before his throne.

[6 : 32] And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness. The firstborn of the dead and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.

And made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, he is coming with the clouds and every eye will see him.

Even those who pierced him. And all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so, amen. I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God.

Who is and who was and who is to come. The Almighty. Wow. That's beautiful. That is rich. That is deep.

Just reading that last week, we began with the first three verses. Just talking about how important it is for us to read aloud the words of Revelation. Just as it is important for us to read the word of God privately or even corporately, right?

[7 : 39] And here at Ontario Community, we do the interactive reading, which has a lot of connecting verses, right? We were going over the sower and the seed. But also, as we see here in Revelation, the importance of us to read, to hear, and to keep.

What's so amazing about that is when you first read it, to read and to hear, you're like, well, if it's being read out loud and I'm hearing it, it's to understand it, though.

It's just like how often in Scripture where we see this verse, we read it, where it says, Let those who have ears, let him hear. It is hearing so that they can understand.

The transforming, there's a lot of transformation that comes through the word of God. And just like the song that we sang earlier, speak to me through your word, through your spirit. Speak your words of life.

Just like how Scripture says, your words are spirit and life. And so Christ is revealed, right? He's revealed by God, who sends his angel John for his servants.

[8 : 44] And there's this blessing. And I think it's fascinating. When we find verses that say, well, where is the blessing? Well, a blessing that comes from God by reading this book together is just, that's very comforting in here, too.

And it's important for us to read. I want you to keep that in mind, to read, to hear, and to keep, right? Hold on to the words that you have heard and that you understand.

Keep it within you, right? Just when we're thinking about the changing of our mind, when we think of metanoia, our minds are being changed, our hearts are being transformed, so that we become more like the Lord.

And so when we go on then into verses 4 and 5, it's saying, John, to the seven churches that are in Asia, grace and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come.

And when we're talking about this, it's very interesting where it's talking about the seven spirits who are before his throne. You can find in your notes, we're not going to go there, but there's what is known as the sevenfold fullness of the Spirit, which is representing completeness in Isaiah chapter 44, verse 6.

[10 : 01] So it's talking about the dwelling of the Spirit with these seven churches. And that's something that is very important for us. And so we also see in verse 5, it mentions about Jesus Christ as what, church?

The faithful witness, right? What's the second one then, church? The firstborn of the dead and the ruler of kings on earth. So you have three things that are being listed here.

Now, the faithful witness, right, testifying to God and the power of the Lord, we have in here what is the firstborn of the dead. When we read that, you're like, what in the world is that talking about? We're talking about the firstborn of the resurrection. Now, for some of you, you might say, well, what about Lazarus? Wasn't he raised from the dead? When we're talking about the resurrection of Christ, it is not having to die again.

That is what we're talking about, the firstborn of the dead. Never to die again. That is different than Lazarus. And the rulers of kings on earth. Amen to that one, right?

[11:09] We think of all those that are in authority in the past. We think of the authorities in the present. And we think of how God is the ruler of all authority. There is no one that is above our Lord and our God.

And that should give us great comfort. Because quite honestly, when we think of kings, rulers, nations even, those in, I don't want to criticize the government too much here, but relying on God is much better than relying on humans.

Amen? You know what I mean. You guys know exactly what I'm talking about. And so in this here, we see here, it goes on further then, to him who loves us, right?

That Jesus Christ loves all of us and has freed us from our sins by his blood. The lamb that was slain. When we think of that imagery, when we partake of communion, we're talking about the bread, the body that was broken, and the cup of the new covenant by his blood.

So it's referencing here, the forgiveness of our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father. And so we are freed by the sacrifice from Christ.

[12:23] And it's interesting. We talk about so much. It's important for us to know when we become a Christian, we become a new creation, right? That's not the only promise that we have, though.

We have a new identity. We have ongoing transformation that comes through him. We have to certainly follow in the footsteps of Christ. But it's talking about being a part of the kingdom.

That's an interesting one. To know that we're part of something that's much greater than what the earth has to offer should give us a great deal of comfort and security to know that when we think of God and the kingdom that he provides, we're a part of that.

We are a citizen of heaven, as it were. That's so important for us. He made us a kingdom. Now, when we think of priests, what in the world is going on here?

For some of us, we may have that background where we think of priests in a holy order, or we may think of the Old Testament where you had the Levitical priests who had certain duties and responsibilities.

[13:22] And then you have later on in the New Testament something that is known as the priesthood of all believers. So what's interesting for us to note in here is that existing in this kingdom, not only are we saved by grace through faith, but we are called to exist as priests who are dedicated to the Lord, who are witnessing to God, and they are a part of his own.

In other words, one of the things that you'll find in Revelation is the idea of new clothes. We go further about that, and we went over this a little bit last week, talking about the white garments or the white robes that we receive.

And that is part of the new citizenship. That is part of being a member of heaven or part of this priesthood. So that's something that's interesting. For some of us, it may be hard for us to wrap our mind around, but it is something that's in God's word and something we need to take to heart.

So priest to his God, and it's mentioning to him, be the glory and dominion forever. Now, what's very interesting, we go into verse 7, Behold, he's coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, all the tribes of the earth, who will wail on account of him.

What's interesting about that is it's talking about the final judgment. When we think of how every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord, or when we think about in the future with the final judgment, everyone will give account to God.

[14:54] That's very important for us to know. And so in this, we can see that there is, even those who pierced him, all the tribes of the earth will wail on account to him.

So mentioning that at the end, everyone will have to give an account to God. And it really matters as we go further into Revelation, is your name in the book of life?

Or is it not? We'll go further into that as we go along, but this is another thing that is very well connected. And it goes on in verse 8 where it's saying, I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come.

There's a lot of connections in your notes that I wish if we had all the time, we would be here for many hours. But go look at your notes. Go look at your Bible study, and you'll see the connections that is found within here.

So these are the things that we can observe then, right? What is happening? Christ's future coming. And this is the Alpha and the Omega, right? Who Christ is and our identity in him.

[15 : 58] And then the revelation and the blessing. And so as I've mentioned before, I'll mention again, it's important for us to go through all of these verses. And even if we come back with questions and we don't have all the answers, that is okay.

Did you ace every single test that you've ever been in? If you have, I want to know your secret for sure. But the reality is that we are a work in progress.

We come to the Lord. We're all on this journey, this spiritual journey before we come to know Christ. Then we come to know the Lord and we begin a journey in Christ where we are continuing to learn and to grow.

Just as I mentioned earlier, the seed being planted into the soil and taking root. That's the parabolic language. But in the revelation language then, it is reading and hearing, coming to understand and keeping it, implementing it into your life, living it out what you have learned.

How many of you know somebody? They continue to learn and learn and they never act upon what they've learned. I hope it's not you when you're raising your hand. I'm saying if you know somebody, right? I know a few people who are like that.

[17 : 05] They continually learn and they're always growing. They're never doing anything with it and it makes you wonder. And I'm not saying it's bad to learn. It's certainly good to learn. But through learning, there should be a call for you to live and act upon what you've learned.

We can think about that not only in the everyday world that we live in, but especially when it comes to the Word of God. When you're learning God and His Word and the deeper things that come from Him, we are to be molded.

We are to act upon our faith and to live it out every single day. That's with those that we interact with, right? Our friends and our family. How are you living and loving like Christ? The words that you speak, the actions that you have, how is that being manifest from the Word?

So part of keeping the Word is, yes, never letting it go, but it's also living it out. It's also being able to share in what you have learned. And so when we go then into the interpretation, I always mention here that here at Ontario Community, observation is the understanding that Scripture is our source. This is our book. And we are blessed to have this book. We read what it says. Then we have the I, which is the interpretation. What can we learn from this?

[18 : 24] And then finally, there's that final one, which is application. What can we do about this? So here is interpretation. What can we learn? From beginning to end, Christ reigns.

Amen? That's a heavy one right there. That's one that we should all know, right? When we talk about the Alpha and the Omega, the coming, the clouds, the Son of Man appearing with dominion over everything.

It's so much how we found in Scripture, when we went over the parables, where the Master would go away for a while, and then finally return, right? When we were talking so much of those patterns. This is the return of the King, as it were, right? That the Lord will see to it that what He has set in motion will come to completion. And so it is the return of the kings, and we as servants, as a new creation, as priests in this kingdom, are preparing the way for Christ to return.

Now, it's important for me to mention here, some of you more tech-savvy people might have seen recently that some people were talking about this week, that the end of the world was going to happen this week.

[19 : 35] Some were saying it was going to be the rapture, some were saying it was going to be the end of the world, and I'm not criticizing the heart of preparation. We shouldn't criticize that when people are saying Jesus is coming true.

I say amen to that. But we don't know the time in which that will happen. I would certainly hate, as your pastor, to say Christ is going to return on Tuesday, and then it doesn't happen, and then I'm going to have to say, I'm going to come up here, and I'll be very embarrassed.

It's important for us, though, the heart of that is to be in anticipation and in preparation for Christ's return. That is the heart of the matter.

And when we see all these timelines, just as I mentioned, I'm like, really, did someone have to predict the world would end when we just started this? We think about it, that we trust in the living God. We don't know when Christ will return, and that's okay.

By us being saved by grace through faith, by us growing in the things of God and living out and sharing in the gospel, think of how much time that we have to share in our testimony with other people.

[20 : 38] Think of how important it is before Christ returns, how important it is for us to steward our time wisely. So that's how things get connected in here.

And so when we're talking about then again, the pierced one will be seen by all. It's talking about what is to come, the end, and the language of the first and the last is just talking about our triune God, right?

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Some denominations will mention it as the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Well, Father, Son, Spirit, whatever you want to call it, and hopefully it's biblical, right?

Is that understanding that the triune God has been there since the foundation of the earth. There's a verse, I didn't put it in my notes, but there's a verse, I want to say it's in Proverbs, where it says, before the earth was made, I was there.

And you're like, whoa. Just like very similar to what you find in Genesis, that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was empty and void, right?

[21 : 48] We think about how the Spirit was hovering around the waters. I need to take a sip real quick. And so how important that is. Now, the firstborn of the dead, I want to make this very clear when we're talking about that, is that it is known as prototokos, which means talking about the supremacy, the order of things.

Now, when I mention that, some of you may be like, okay, Christ reigns supreme. There are some people who will twist that specific wording in that. But in all of this, from beginning to end, Christ reigns.

Christ has been there as part of the Trinity. And we have to think that, ask yourself the question, do your words and do your actions match who he is? Are you being transformed by the living God?

The second thing then is, in Christ, we are a kingdom of priestly people. What in the world are you saying here, pastor, right? That Christ has made us this kingdom and has made us priests.

And the priesthood then is for all believers to worship, to live, and to love like him, and to be in preparation of the return of the king. From salvation flows transformation and future promises.

[23 : 07] And so, let us, when we think of this thing of priesthood, let us think of the idea of how important it is for us to grow and to live and to love like Christ.

Let your allegiance be to Christ. And even through trials and through tribulations, think of the imagery of how Christ is the solid rock and we build our house upon the rock.

Who in the world builds their house on a sand unless it's a sand castle, right? We think about that.

And so, the third one then is to be good soil. I put this parabolic language on here because what's very interesting about this is how, when we went over the seed and the soil, one of the big important things was the soil representing our hearts.

And kind of seeing how this is connected, we have to make sure that our hearts are not hardened, that our hearts are softened, and that they are ready to receive, to receive God and his word.

And so, when we're thinking in the context of revelation then, as we read the word of God, we might not hear it. And that's kind of a scary thing to think about.

[24 : 18] But we read, and by golly, we've got to pray that we understand what the word says. What I've always found very interesting is how God will protect the hidden things of his word from the outside.

I always thought that was so interesting that scripture would speak about that. But what's important for us is that we should pray for softened hearts, for people to open their Bible, and for them to understand it.

May they be convicted. May they, if they're not a Christian, may they come to believe in Jesus Christ. May their hearts be receptive, and that imagery of the seed going into the soil, may it take root.

That's why we talk so much about being rooted in Christ, or how important it is for us to bear fruit. That we are the continuation of that work in progress. So when we're reading and we're hearing,

we're understanding, and let's keep the word with us.

Let us keep it in our hearts. Right? It's just like how I've mentioned before that when we think of the, this little light of mine, hide it under a bushel, no, I'm going to let it shine.

[25 : 30] Let your life radiate the love of Christ. Let your life radiate the truth of Christ. And so that's something, it's a lot that we have to think about.

And so, revelation promises a blessing for those who read, hear, and keep the word. And so let us, let us think about that. Let us be encouraged to, not just read revelation, even though it specifically talks about revelation, but be encouraged to read God's word.

And be encouraged to be transformed by it. that's so important for us to pay attention and to continue, even if you are a Christian, to ask God to continue to mold you, to have continued understanding.

It's just like how many times we may read the word and you're like, I didn't understand this before. What in the world? How many times have I read that passage and I didn't get it?

And finally I'm like, oh, it's happened to more often than not. So now we go to then the, the application is how should we respond?

[26 : 37] How should we live this out? The first thing then is to declare and display Christ's grace and truth. Let your life, may you come to know Christ first and foremost, right?

And as you're growing, may you live accordingly, right? To declare Christ, even when culture, even when Babylon, we're going to go into further into that, when Babylon is against you or pressures you or when people go against you.

That is also, I mean, when you go through Psalms, how many times was David saying that there's so many enemies that are rising up against him? It's, we have to think that we are focusing on Christ and his word and living it out and sharing in the gospel, sharing in our testimony, exhibiting the love and each and every situation is going to be different.

I think of the culture that we live in today. This world needs Christ more than ever before. This world needs the love of Christ, that's for sure. But the world also needs the truth of Christ as well.

And so when we think about how we are saved by grace through faith, we've got to live and love.

It's a balance between the two of them. And so when we think of the words that we speak, how are you speaking to people?

[27 : 57] Are you encouraging them? Are you motivating them? Sometimes you do have to give a harsh truth for sure, but it's not just always harsh truth or it's not always just encouraging words.

It's being able, when we're living and loving like Christ, we've got to discern and we've got to figure out, well, which, how are we going to respond to, you know, how are you going to respond to your brother versus your cousin versus your co-worker kind of thing?

that is what we are to do. And so be salt and light, let your light shine. And I can't help but think of the imagery of the idea of Babylon, the idea of us living in a place that is full of evil, full of hatred, full of division, full of darkness.

And you think of everything that Christ offers, the light that shines in the dark, the truth that transcends lies, the freedom in him and not the enslavement of people.

Those are just some of the things that we can think of when we think of Christ. And so ask yourself the question, how can I declare Christ and how can I display Christ in my everyday life?

[29 : 16] The second thing then is to await him, to stand firm, and to persevere, right? That's the keeping, right? Just how we talked about reading, hearing, so that you understand, and keeping, right?

We are waiting upon the Lord. We are standing firm. When storms come through our life, we think of God as our refuge and our strength.

That we can come to God no matter whatever happens in our life. As I've said to many people, and I'll say it here from, well, from the pulpit, I guess, man will fail you, but God will never fail you.

And I can't tell you how many times in my own experience, and you can think of your own experiences, or someone you know where someone has been hurt by a friend or a brother or whatever.

But when we think of God, He loves us, and He is there with us in every season of life. We think of the good, God is there with us.

[30 : 26] Praise God. We think of the bad, God is there with us. And we think of the ugly, God is also there with us. As the strong tower.

And in knowing this, it is comforting to know that God is there with us in every situation and in every season. We think about this, we wait upon Him and we wait for His return.

We rest in Him. It's a call for us that as we are growing in Christ and we trust in Him and we know that no matter what the world throws at me, I'm going to remain rooted in Christ.

That's an encouragement for us to come together as the body of Christ. To pray for one another. To encourage one another. To support each other.

To be in the Word and to practice the grace and truth of Christ. So we think of how can we hold fast? How can we keep the Word? And then finally, we have here to live in response.

[31 : 29] It's interesting, we continue to read. We continue to hear and we continue to keep because God is not finished with us.

God is going to continue to work in and through our lives. For some of us, and I hope none of us ever think this, that when you become a Christian, that's it. It's a done deal. That's the end of your life.

No, no, no. That is the beginning. And what an amazing journey the Lord will have you on. It won't always be the smoothest ride, but knowing that you've got God by your side every step of the way, that's the encouraging thing.

That is the wonderful thing to know. We think of the imagery of sheep as they travel to green pastures. How often is the road smooth?

Not very, right? You've got rocks. You've got all sorts of predators. You've got all sorts of, you've got the weather. All sorts of things on the journey.

[32 : 36] But the encouragement is that Christ being the great shepherd is going to be there with you. And how often do we slip and stumble? We fall down. Or sometimes we run away.

But the Lord's going to be there with us in that. And so when we're living in response then, may you read the word. May you read it privately.

May you read it publicly. May you hear. If you haven't heard, ask God for understanding. I found there's times I'm reading the word and I'm like, I do not understand this at all.

I'll be honest. Sometimes I've got to pray about it and ask God, speak to me on this. And sometimes I don't get an answer right away and it's frustrating, I admit.

But God continues to reveal himself through his word and through his spirit. So ask God for understanding and for transformation that your heart will be softened and that any sort of, as I'm saying, any sort of distraction, I'm not calling anyone out, so I apologize.

[33 : 46] I apologize. Right when I was saying, don't let any distraction come, then the phone rings, right? So I apologize. So we're good, we're good. I'm not calling you out though. Right? In other words, right, we think for a moment, ask God to remove any distractions, anything that's hindering you from being close to him.

Right? Because we live in a world of distractions, amen? How many of you have a notification on your phone? Right? I get too many of them and I don't like them.

I put it on silent modes a lot of times, right? We have a lot of distractions. We have things that can derail us, right? Things that can just completely get us off course.

We focus on the course that is in Christ and the transformation that comes from him that we share in the gospel and we change the culture. There are more, there are a lot more people that don't know Christ than people that do.

That's a scary thing, but not so scary because we know the truth and we've got to share it with other people. And so that's important for us. And so let us be rooted in Christ.

[34 : 53] May we know that we are loved by Christ. May we know that we're freed from sin and let us await for the coming of the return of the king as he comes with the clouds.

And let us be a people who read, hear, and keep God's word holding fast with patience until he comes again.

Can I get an amen? Let's pray together. And Father God, we thank you once again for this time and this opportunity for us to gather together. What an incredible set of eight verses we have.

And quite frankly, we don't understand all of it, but that's okay. I pray that everyone has learned and grown in their faith. I pray for those that may not know your son Jesus Christ, that they be encouraged to believe in the Lord and be saved, believing in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I pray for those who may have been hurt or distant, that there will be a sense of comfort, peace, and security, and healing. I pray for those that are growing in Christ, that they continue to grow and that they will bear fruit.

[36 : 02] And I pray for all of us that we will be moved to live and love like your son Jesus Christ. May we read, may we hear so that we understand, and may we keep your word. And may we look towards you in every season of life.

May we focus on you and not get distracted, not be derailed or deterred or whatever. We pray that we can focus on you as the source of life, as the way, the truth, and the life.

we love you so much and we just thank you once again that we have this opportunity to come together, that we can sing these songs, that we can lift your name on high, and that we can open your word.

How wonderful a God you are, the true God, the living God, who's been there from the beginning, who's the same yesterday, today, today, and forever.

We thank you for all that you have done and all you continue to do. It is in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray and we all say together, Amen, church. Amen.

[37 : 12] Thank you for tuning into Ontario Community Church. Visit OntarioCommunityChurch.org for more information about our church, to connect, how you can get involved, or our sermon archive.

Please share this message with friends and families. This next week, we will continue in our sermon series through the book of Revelation, going over, Revelation chapter 1, verses 9 to 20.

Grace and peace to you and our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you.

Amen.