



Lifted Up

The Third Week of Lent

“Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

John 12:31-32 (NIV)

Jesus is saying so much in these few sentences. Judgment, victory, death, revolution. In predicting His crucifixion, Jesus also claimed His kingship—Satan defeated, and all of humanity turning their eyes to the Lord.

But this is one of those “now and not yet” prophecies. Judgment has been passed, but evil continues to plague the earth. The Bible is the bestselling book on the planet. Yet most people still refuse to acknowledge Christ’s lordship. Jesus won the war through His death and resurrection, but the forces of evil haven’t yet conceded and the battle rages on. So we wait.

This in-between time, these days, years, centuries while we wait for Jesus’ prophecy to be completely fulfilled, feel slow and heavy. Less like a ticking clock than like a gasp, a held breath before the exhale. We are tempted to ask: “If Satan has already been defeated, why does he still have so much power? If Jesus is drawing all people to Himself, why do so many people still deny Him? If the war has been won, why is life still so hard?”



Valid questions, certainly, but not questions asked in faith. The questions asked in faith are, “How do I live in this in-between time? Knowing that the war has been won, how do I fight today’s battle? What can I do to join Jesus in His work of drawing all people to Himself?”

Like Advent, Lent is a time of waiting. In Advent, we wait for the King’s coming birth. In Lent, we wait for His coming resurrection. Waiting can look like putting your feet up and doing nothing, or it can look like pacing furiously or anxiously tapping toes on the floor. Or waiting can be used for preparation—preparing ourselves, our churches, our world to partake in what was accomplished on the cross.

Because when Jesus was lifted up on the cross, it looked like defeat. But in reality, He was lifted up in glory and in victory.



In the past week, when have I asked questions that lacked faith?

What can I do today to prepare myself, my church, or my world to participate in Jesus’ victory?

Exercise:

1. Lift this exercise up to the Lord, asking Him to highlight what He wants you to notice.
2. Listen to the song “Dear Friend” (https://youtu.be/xlXLRTBatZA?si=W9TD_hVtmGQgGdMN).
3. Now consider the lyrics (right). What words or phrases catch your attention? Ask the Lord to reveal to you why those words or phrases speak to you.
4. Listen to the song again or just re-read the lyrics. Notice how you react to the words. Ask God to show you why you’ve reacted this way.
5. Finally, ask God what He wants to say to you through the song and/or your reactions to this exercise.

(This song is a take on 2 Peter 3:3-9, in which Peter addresses those who doubt the Lord’s return.)

Dear Friend

Dear friend, there’s a story goin’ ‘round
That says you’re gonna be married soon
But you’ve been sayin’ that for years
There can be no wedding without a groom

He said he went away
To make a place for you and Him
Oh, you know He’s gonna come back
But you just don’t know when

Dear friend, He is not slow in keeping His promises
As some understand slowness to be
Keep a watch out, don’t lose faith, He said He would come for you
He’s gonna come for you, you wait and see, just wait and see

Dear friend, people joke
They laugh and they make fun
When they hear talkin’ all about
The groom who’s gonna come

He’s been gone a long, long time
Are there any doubts to confess?
Do you wonder if you will
Ever wear that wedding dress?

Dear friend, He is not slow in keeping His promises
As some understand slowness to be
Keep a watch out, don’t lose faith, He said He would come for you
He’s gonna come for you, you wait and see

“Dear Friend,” Words & Music: Charlie Peacock © 1990
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Goes On Music