**ARE YOU READY FOR CHRIST?**

Are you ready for Christmas? Probably not. This time of year, there is *so much* to do: decorating the home, buying gifts, getting ready for family. However, if you are not ready for Christmas, you shouldn’t fret too much. Frankly, whether you have the perfect gift for everyone is unimportant for the celebration of Christmas. Whether your halls are properly decked is irrelevant to Christmas. In fact, if you think that those things *are* important, you prove how little you understand Christmas.

Christmas is important for only one reason. Just as Christ came once, bringing salvation, so he will come again, bringing the end of the world as we know it. He came the first time as a weak, helpless baby. He comes again as King and Judge and Lord of all. And so a better question than “Are you ready for Christmas?” is “Are you ready for Christ?” Christmas is importantly only because a proper understanding of Christmas is what will prepare us for Christ’s return.

In these weeks leading up to Christmas at Beautiful Savior, we are going to spend some time talking about the true meaning of Christmas by wrestling with that question. Are you ready for Christ?

Our themes:

**Christ Will Come Unexpectedly**

Preparing for Christmas is relatively easy for this reason – we know when it will be. Christmas doesn’t move. It is always December 25th. That firm and well-known date allows us to prepare. We know *when* we need to be ready. Preparing for Christ’s second coming is more difficult, since no one knows when that will be. It could be 1000 years from now. It could be tomorrow. It is absolutely vital that you are prepared to meet Christ on Judgment Day. Since we don’t know when that is, we must live in a constant state of readiness.

**Prepare by Repenting**

When you prepare for your Christmas company, it typically includes a thorough house cleaning. You want your home looking your best when your honored guests come. And yet, dirt and clutter probably would not offend those guests too much. How much more then should we prepare for Christ by cleaning the dirt and clutter out of our hearts! Because the sin we hold in our hearts *does* offend the Holy One who is coming. How can we say we are ready to embrace our coming Savior in love and joy if we don’t first put down the sins that caused his death… the sins which could cut us off from his love forever? We need to prepare our hearts for Christ’s coming through sincere repentance.

**Prepare by Proclaiming**

Imagine you have planned a lavish Christmas party. You have thought of everything. You only forgot one thing – to invite guests. What a colossal waste! Likewise, God has prepared a lavish party. It will be thrown in heaven. There will be endless joys and wonders. And because God is a perfect planner, he has remembered to invite his guests. Before Jesus came the first time, God raised up a man we call John the Baptist. John told the people how to prepare to meet Christ. And now, in preparation of Jesus’ second coming, God calls us – believers – to proclaim his Word far and wide, so that many may join us in the eternal celebration Christ is bringing.

**Prepare for the Kingdom**

Parents often have to warn their children of growing greedy at Christmas. The kids ask for too much – too many toys, to big of requests. And indeed, it can be a problem when children want too much of this world. But it is even a greater problem when people want too little of the next. So often, we ask too little of Christ. We want a little bit of earthly comfort. We want a few bauble and trinket type blessings. And he says “no” precisely because such requests demonstrate we don’t understand what he came to give to us – the peace and joy and comfort of an everlasting, unshakable kingdom. On this final Sunday before Christmas, we prepare for Emmanuel – “God with us” – by remembering the immense gift he comes to give.