

HOW SUNDAYS CHANGED THE WORLD
October 29, 2017 Morning Service
Revelation 19:1-10

Take your Bible and go to the book of Revelation this morning, chapter 19. We'll begin reading in just a moment in verse number 1 and read through verse 10 on this historical morning at the place we call Olive. We're grateful to God for the launch of our new campus starting official today so why don't you join me in saying good morning to Warrington? Join me now, would you? Yes, indeed. Give them a good hand. Let them know you're glad that we're a part of that. Amen. Thank you, choir.

Well we're honored that they'll be right there with us morning after morning. We'll be sharing and we're glad that they've tuned our way. I'm amazed at the people who listen on radio, watch the livestream, Facebook feed, people that just watch a lot of different ways and listen a lot of different ways here at Olive. Sometimes I think we've done ourselves a disservice by making it so readily available outside that people don't come inside but it's a great ministry for folks that can't get here or just decide to tune this way. We are delighted that you're a part of our church family here at a place called Olive on this Sunday morning.

This is the 500th anniversary of what is known as the Protestant Reformation. This Tuesday, 31 October, 1517, 500 years ago a Catholic monk named Martin Luther – I was amazed that Martin Luther King's father visited Germany, was so impressed years ago with Martin Luther, he came back and changed his name from Michael King to Martin Luther King. He had a little boy that he had named Michael, Jr. He changed his name to Martin Luther King, Jr. and the man who led out in the civil rights movement in America, his father took this man's name and gave it to his own son. That's where Martin Luther King came from 500 years ago.

This man was a scholar reading Hebrew and Greek like you'd read the morning newspaper. Certainly he spoke German. He was a Catholic monk, a professor teaching theology and God began to deal with him because the church was selling indulgences. What they were doing is they were saying, "If you'd give so much money then your sins will be forgiven." They were raising money to build St. Peter's in Rome with that and they were selling the gospel for finance. Martin Luther digging into the scripture said, "It's just simply wrong," and he rebelled to reform the church.

He dug into the New Testament because then only the Bible was available, it was only available to the priest, to the monks, to the teachers. The common man could not read the Bible. It was not in his own language and he didn't have a copy of it but the Guttenberg Press had come along and now Martin Luther was translating the Hebrew and the Greek into German and giving it to the common man. As he began to read Romans, oh he loved Romans, he found Habakkuk chapter 2, verse 4, quoted in Romans 1:17 and this verse gripped him when he found the Bible saying, "For in it the

righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith as it is written but the righteous man, the just man shall live by faith.”

Martin Luther knew for the first time that his salvation did not come through a church, through a law, through his works, through a pope, through counsels of the church or even the teachings of some are from that that he would do. Certainly it could not be bought with buying an indulgence. Salvation came or man was made righteous by faith in Christ and Christ alone.

On this coming Tuesday, All Saints Day, October 31, 1517, Martin Luther went to the door of the church in Wittenberg and he placed on that door which was often used as just a bulletin board for people walking by, he posted 95 statements. We call them the 95 theses. I challenge you to go read it. You'll hear a lot about it in the news and different places this week as that 500th anniversary rolls around. He just made statements. He was saying indulgence is wrong. You can read. I read them just the week before last again.

I've been reading Eric Metaxas' new book on Martin Luther. I'm almost finished. I'm reading a chapter a day until I get up to October 31 when I'm finishing the book. It's amazing what God did with one man when Luther did what he did. He didn't want to start a fight. He was just looking to discuss and debate with people the theology of the day but the gasoline of the Holy Spirit hit that. Months to come and literally years to come there was a reformation called the Protestant Reformation. It was a protest. We Protestants are named for that. We wouldn't even be here today had it not been for a man who put those 95 statements on that door and he changed the world forever.

William Tyndale was one of his peers. He was working more out of England. It was Tyndale that would translate the Hebrew and the Greek into English for the common man. It was Tyndale. Luther would not be killed but Tyndale would be killed for doing it. They would burn him at the stake. They buried his ashes. Later they named him as a heretic and they came and took his ashes and his bones and threw them in the Avon that went to the Swift that went out into the ocean. As many of us say that they went from river to river, from ocean to ocean, and finally that lapped up on the shores of a place called North America. Friend, you cannot stop the word of God. It is powerful and it goes forward and these men paid an ultimate price to change the world.

I want to make a statement. It's somewhat bold and maybe a little brash but I really believe it. I believe that the church of Jesus Christ, God's Sunday people we're calling them this morning, the people that come together around an empty tomb and we've been talking about that, I believe that God's church, God's Sunday people have done more good in this world than any other group in the history of mankind. You say, "Pastor, that's awful broad and bold."

Dr. D. James Kennedy, that great Presbyterian pastor down in Fort Lauderdale wrote a book entitled, *What If Jesus Had Never Been Born?* In that book he makes this statement. He speaks of the Sunday people, the church. He says they invented the

modern hospital, the university, gave literacy to the masses, created free enterprise, representative government, and civil liberties. They abolished slavery both in England and the United States, elevated the status of women, and invented the very concepts of charity and benevolence. Church people. Sunday people.

The church sometimes gathered or sometimes just one man. Upward Sports is going all across our world today and it started with one man. He heard a sermon in a church and got a conviction. He raised that up and we see scores of boys and girls playing but many of them saved. Why? Because of one man. I'm telling you, the church, God's people, I believe, have been the most powerful change agent in the whole history of our globe.

We read about the church at its conclusion this morning in Revelation 19, beginning in verse 1 at what we see as the marriage supper of the Lamb. Follow along with me as I read from Revelation 19. Sundays changed the world. Sunday people changed the world.

After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying,

"Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her." And a second time they said, "Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" And a voice came from the throne, saying,

"Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great." Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying,

"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean [now don't miss this next verse, this next sentence fragment, this next phrase]; for the fine linen [it's going to clothe the bride] is the righteous acts of the saints.

Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" [Invited? You mean there are going to be guests? Well there are always guests at a wedding. Here comes the bride. That's His church coming to Christ, the groom. Who are the guests? They are the Old Testament saved. Saved as I say oftentimes, saved on the credit, looking forward to the cross. It's the saints that were saved during the millennial reign. There are going to be people saved after the rapture in the millennium. These are the guests. They're not a part of the redeemed church but

they are a part of God's redeemed family. The church are those that are saved from the empty tomb until the rapture of His bride. But the guests were there and were invited to the marriage supper of the lamb.] *And he said to me, "These are true words of God." Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; [this angel said] I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."*¹

The marriage supper. I was at a wedding yesterday at 4:00 on a Saturday afternoon. A beautiful bride with her attendants coming down the aisle to meet a scared, young man. That's the way it's going to be. I walked in. Nobody paid me any attention. He walked in. His momma looked at him. Nobody else. The attendants came in but then when the bride came in, everybody stood up. All eyes on the bride. Here she was. Everybody turned their back on me. I said, "Here I am." Forget you. All eyes for the bride. Here she came with her daddy. He's sitting right here to my right. Here they came.

When we have a wedding all the eyes are on the bride. Let me tell you, when we get to the marriage supper of the Lamb, all eyes are going to be on the groom. Jesus is the groom and we are being wed unto Him. It's a beautiful picture of His bride coming unto Him and there they meet together and we see the church that changed the world.

Two things I want to say. I'm telling you, I could preach til, well, I could preach until daylight tomorrow on these ten verses. There's enough in there. I mean you could just go on and on and on and on but I'd like somebody here when I get done so I just want to show you a couple of things. I just want to pull out of here two things that I want to rivet in on today because this is the fifth and our last day of I Love Sundays. Not the last day we'll have Sunday but in our emphasis of I Love Sundays, today is that day of I love the church and the church has changed the world. Sunday people change the world and we see that in this text. Two things I want you to see with me this morning.

Number one. I want you to see the church ready. Look at it in verse 7. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself – what's that word? Ready. She's ready. She's ready for the Lord to come.

Yesterday in that wedding all the people were there and I went back in the back. I opened the door as I always do and go and see the bride and her attendants and make sure we've got everything just right. I said, "Are we ready?" The bride looked at me and said, "Pastor, would you please pray? Some of us are nervous." I said, "Sure we will." I always do. I came and put my arm around her and those girls circled up around that sweet bride. We prayed and when we finished I said, "Are we ready?" She looked at me and said, "I'm ready."

¹ Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

I went over to the next room and saw the guys. I went in and looked at the groom. Not a drop of blood in his face. I didn't ask. I just said, "You better get ready." So we circled up and prayed. They had to get ready.

Let me tell you, friend, if you're not ready, you better get ready because I'm telling you, this day's coming. The marriage supper of the Lamb is coming and the only people that are going to be there are those that are ready, have made themselves ready. You say, "Preacher, how do you get ready?" There are two things you've got to do to get ready. Number one. You must be redeemed. The only people in this church are the redeemed. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. Only the saved make up the bride of Christ. Friend, you can be a Baptist and miss it if you didn't believe. You can be a church member and miss it if you've never been converted. You must be in Christ and Christ in you. You must be born again. When you are born of the Spirit, you become the redeemed. You've been bought with a price. You've been purchased. It's not what you did. It's what Jesus did and when He saves you, you are then ready. Ready.

Are you ready? Friend, you better get ready. You can only get ready this side of death. What they were teaching in a Catholic Church of the 1500's, that if you bought an indulgence you could get one of your family members out of purgatory. Let me tell you two things. Number one, purgatory does not exist. It's not a Bible issue. It's just made up. It's a great fundraising ploy but it is not a Bible truth. They had a little song they were singing in the 1500's. When the coin in the offering plate rings, a soul from purgatory springs.

Friend, you cannot buy your way into heaven. You cannot work your way into heaven. Jesus paid it all. He gave the price. The just shall live. That's what Martin Luther found out. This verse gripped him. He said, "It's not by popes or counsels or works or deeds. The just, the righteous shall live by faith. You trust what Christ did and Christ alone and He is enough. It is by Christ alone, through grace alone, through faith alone, in the trust of the word of God alone. He saves you. Hallelujah. Are you ready? Here it said be ready.

Not only to get ready, number two, you must be rejoicing. Four times in this 19th chapter you find the word hallelujah. This is the only place you find the word hallelujah in the Bible. Four times you find the word hallelujah. It's two words put together. *Halle*, *halle*, which is praise and Jehovah is on the back end, an abbreviated word of *jah*, praise Jehovah, praise God. That's the word hallelujah and they are praising God right here. It's the only time you find it in all the Bible. They praised Him for salvation and glory and power. You see, you've got praise for one. You rejoice in one thing. You rejoice in Christ. Then they rejoice that he'd overcome the great harlot, the antichrist that was there. Then they said, "We worship Him." They sat down and said Hallelujah and Amen.

I read the story recently of two men that were on a cruise. They were from different continents of the world. They did not speak the same language and could not

communicate to each other but they saw each other at the mealtime and they'd pass and just kind of nod and tried to talk but there was not a word they could say. One afternoon they found each other sitting and they both had a Bible. The one looked at his Bible and looked at him and nodded and he nodded yes. He held up his Bible and said, "Hallelujah." Anywhere in the world you say that word they know what it means. The guy on the other side looked at him and he looked at his Bible and he said, "Amen." The only two words they could communicate. Hallelujah.

Let me tell you, when God makes us ready, He's going to make us one and we're going to rejoice together, red, yellow, black, white, rich, poor, east, west, north, south. He's going to bring the bride together and we will be His people. If you're not on the boat, you need to get on the boat and you need to get on the boat today. Today, today, today. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. Get ready. See in this text the church ready.

Not only see them ready, number two, I want you to see the church rewarded. The church rewarded. Look at it right here. I showed it to you in verse 8. It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean. You don't wear nasty stuff to a wedding. Clean your shoes before you go. Amen? For the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

What are you going to wear to the marriage supper? I'm going to tell you what you're going to wear. You're going to wear your righteous acts. You say, "Well what if I don't have any?" You're going to be embarrassed. You remember those of you my age when you were just a little kid growing up about the fourth or fifth grade and deep into sleep at night you'd get scared and wake up in a sweat because you thought you were sitting in class in your underwear? You remember? I used to have that dream. When I got off to college I used to have that dream that I was walking into Greek class with no clothes. I wasn't prepared. I knew what the dream was telling me, alright? I'd wake up in the night with a sweat. I'm sure there's some psychological something there that I'm off but if that's true there's a lot of us. I just talk to a lot of people.

Let me tell you, dear friend, you do not want to wake up at the Lamb's marriage supper without your righteous acts. You need to say yes to the dress. Ya'll have seen that show I take it. My wife makes me watch TV with her for two shows, well three really. "Say Yes to the Dress." She likes that. I don't know why. Then there's that one. They give them assignments and they have to make clothes. My wife's a home economics major. I watch that with her. It's the craziest thing I've ever seen. Then she makes me watch the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders. She likes to watch the DCC. I said, "If I must, I will serve my wife by being here for dinner tonight."

"Say Yes to the Dress." They ask the bride. They get her up there. They dress her up and they say, "How much is it?" They'll say, "\$30,000. Do you want it?" She'll say, "No, I don't like it." I say, "\$30,000?" The grandma will cry and say, "I like it so well." But then in a little while they'll get her up there and they'll get it just right and they

say, "Are you saying yes to the dress?" She's crying and her daddy's sitting over here in the corner and he says, "O God, help us."

Friend, there's only one thing you wear to the marriage supper of the Lamb. It's your righteous acts. Some of us are not going to have very much on if we don't change our ways. Casting Crowns, that marvelous gospel singing group from Atlanta, Georgia, a few years ago they wrote a song entitled, "If We Are the Body." If we are the body, if we're the body of Christ, why aren't His arms reaching? If we're the body, why aren't His hands healing? If we're the body, why aren't his words teaching? It's a powerful, powerful song. You're a part of the body. You're His hands and His eyes and His feet and His legs. Why aren't we at work doing righteous acts? Let me tell you, friend, you will be clothed if clothed at all at the marriage supper with the righteous acts of your life.

It's time we get about changing the world. Jesus spoke in Matthew 25, that powerful parable of the talents. He said a man got ready to leave and he called his servants together. He gave one of them five talents and one two talents and another one, one talent. He went on a trip and he came back and the one that had five said, "Master, I've worked and I've turned it into ten." He said, "Well done." Then he looked at one with two and he said, "What have you done?" He said, "I took two and I've turned it into four." He said, "Well done." The one with one said, "Master, I was fearful I would lose it and I buried it in the ground. I have the talent you gave me." Jesus said the master looked at him and said, "You vile and wicked slave. Take what's his and give it to the one with ten."

When God saved you He gave you talent. I don't know if you're a five or a ten, a two a four, or a one. I hear a lot of stuff about privilege today. I'm just telling you, friend, some people have more to do with than others do. Be it monetarily, be it education, be it domestically. I don't know where God's put you. You can argue about that all you want to. All I know is you've got talent because God says He gives gifts to His people. Some of the greatest folks I've ever known in all the world are one talent people. One talent.

My first church out of seminary there was a man that was the head usher. He could not read or write one word. He stood there for years greeting people as they came in. Big, tall. When I say a 70-year-old Texan what comes to your mind? He was that. White Stetson hat he put up on the rack. Coat and tie every Sunday standing at the one door entrance. Let me tell you, when there was a problem there was one man the people that needed prayer went to and it was that one-talent usher. He couldn't read. He couldn't write. I'm telling you, he could get hold of God.

I remember in our town it came a flood one spring. There was water this deep in people's houses. I waded in it helping them get their stuff out of their house. Somebody looked around. They called that elderly man's name and said, "Where is he?" I said, "I don't know. He's probably at home praying for rain. He doesn't know it's come a flood. You better go find him. I'm just here to tell you."

Some of the most powerful people you'll ever meet are one-talent people. They just use what they've got. In my second church, there was a young man that walked down the aisle one Sunday morning. He had a crooked face. He talked crooked because he's had a stroke and he couldn't talk out of his mouth straight. He talked like this. He had one eye that was kind of drooping. His hair didn't look right. Sometimes people would look at him and it was hard to even look at him. I remember he walked down the aisle one Sunday and he said, "Pastor, God's call me to be a preacher." I thought to myself, God help him. He never pastored a church. I don't know if he ever gave a sermon but I know this. In the school where he was the maintenance director he shared Jesus with more kids, won more boys and girls picking up the trash and saying, "Have you ever heard about the Lord?"

I got a feeling when I get to heaven I'm going to be standing in line and there's going to be a guy up there at the front and he's going to say, "Hey, preacher, what are you doing at the back of the line?"

Some of the best people I've ever known are one talent people. That's not all God puts in the church. He puts some two-talent people in the church. These people have more. To whom much is given, much is required. There are five-talent people in this church. Let me tell you, if you're burying your talent, you're going to stand naked at the judgment. It's time you take your gifts and put them to work. Don't bury them in the ground. It takes vision and courage and obedience and effort and work. It takes the power of the Holy Ghost within you. God'll release that unto His glory. When you get to heaven you're going to be glad you used it all because they're going to drape you in fine linen.

I walked in this morning. One of the ladies out there, she said, "Pastor, I love that green suit. You just look so good in that color. It matches your color wheel." I didn't even know I had a wheel. She said, "Yeah, you're an autumn. That goes good with you." I walked on a little further and another guy looked at me and he said, "I see you got new glasses." I said, "Yeah." He said, "It makes you look younger." I said, "I'm going to get me two more pair." I'm going to wear one like these golfers and put them on the back of my head so coming and going I'm going to look that way.

I hope to look nice but I'll tell you where I want to be fully dressed is at the marriage supper of the Lamb. It'll be a good day when the keeper of the fine linen says, "Try this on. You've been faithful over a few things. We're going to make you ruler over many."

Friend, it's time some people in this church go to work. The church has changed the world. Where did the Salvation Army come from? The church. YMCA, it's more than a song. Do you know what the "C" stands for? It's Christian. It's Young Men's Christian Association. They built one downtown. YMCA. It's up there as big as life. It's just forgotten its moorings. It's forgotten. If you go in there you couldn't find the gospel in there in a 40-acre field but it started with the church reaching young men.

Compassion International. It's the church. Samaritan's Purse is the church. Who went to Puerto Rico? Samaritan's Purse went to Puerto Rico. Who sends out these boxes to these kids that we're putting together? Samaritan's Purse does that and we help with that. Who does food for the hungry? The church. Who started the Ministry Village? The church. Who started the Waterfront Mission? Christians. Who started the Health and Hope Clinic? Christians on and on and on I could go, I'm telling you. Most of the hospitals that started in this country started faith based. Most of them have a name like that. Two of them in our town. Sacred Heart and Baptist.

Quint Studer was with us in a men's meeting the other night and he told us about working in Chicago. He worked at a hospital called Christ Hospital. Christ Hospital. He said many the night it was that they'd pick up somebody that had been run over, drunk, or manic, or somebody with a problem, a heart attack. They'd put them in the ambulance and they'd go and they'd kind of come to and they'd look up and say, "Where are you taking me?" They'd say, "We're taking you to Christ." That gets your attention. Amen. That's a good place to go unless you're not ready. I got a feeling a lot of people repented in that ambulance on the way. They said, "Lord, where are we going?"

Universities. Harvard. Harvard started as a school to train preachers. Now they make fun of them. Most of the great institutions you go, you'll find a chapel in the middle because they built everything in the university. They put something in the university. It was the steeple. It was God. Now they cut the cross off the top of it. Now they move it to the peripheral. What I'm telling you is that Christians need to keep being creative. We serve the greatest Creator in all the world. Let the Holy Spirit be creative through you. Amen. Leave a legacy so that one day fine linen.

You say, "Pastor, I try. People just do me wrong." That's alright. You'll get hurt doing this work. They killed Tyndale. Let me tell you, if they kill you, you get a promotion. You're better off where you're going than where you are.

I did a funeral early this week. One of the ladies has been a member of this church almost 50 years. Six weeks ago she moved to California. Her daughter, an airline attendant for United, moved her out there to live with her because she was getting a little feeble. She wasn't too bad. Two days before she died she took her on a day cruise. She came back and put her to bed. They called her the next morning. They said, "We went to wake up your mother and she died during the night." Went on a cruise the day before. Went to bed and woke up in the arms of Jesus. I said, "How do you get on that list?" Where do you sign up? I don't want to go tonight but I'd like to get a reservation if I could.

You don't get the time and you don't get the way. Some will go in peace. Some will go in pain but all of us are going to go. Everybody's leaving here for another place. One day you're either going to stand at the marriage supper of the Lamb to be a part of that or you're going to be one of those that said, "Depart from me. I don't know you."

There's two things that the church ought to be doing. Number one, the church must trust the Lord. Number two, the church must touch the world. We must trust the Lord and touch the world. We go this way. Then we go this way. We trust the Lord. We get saved right there. You don't get to the marriage supper by what you do. You get to the marriage supper by what He did for you. But then you get your fine linen by what you do. The indwelling Holy Spirit is in us and we trust the Lord and we touch the world. We trust the Lord and we touch the world.

Man, I have struggled. The biggest struggle I've got is me. I don't know about you but my problem is me. I've shared this with you before but I'm just telling you, when you look at me, this is not some cheap cut up here. I'm telling you, this is Grade A flesh standing in front of you. My education gets in my way. My experience gets in my way. I've pastored this church – next Sunday will be 27 years. I came here this coming Tuesday. On the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation will be my 27th day of moving to Pensacola. I came here on Halloween. Some people thought the devil came to be the pastor of the church. My experience gets in my way sometimes.

I keep on my desk my first preaching Bible. I knew I was going to preach on this this morning so I just went over there and it's got pages torn out of it. I left it on top of the car after church one night and it fell off and got torn up a little bit but I found it back in the middle of the road. I put it back together and I've got it on my desk. I keep it there as a reminder. I preached a revival in Flat Rock, Alabama. It's written in the front of it. They gave me \$50. I preached Sunday through Friday. I gave \$50 in 1971. That was more than I was worth. I went and bought that Bible, that preaching Bible. It was the first preaching Bible I ever had.

I just touched it this morning. I held it and I read Revelation 19 out of there. It doesn't even have Hallelujah in it. The King James doesn't use the word Hallelujah. Nowhere in the Bible does the King James have Hallelujah. It says alleluia. A-L-L. Alleluia, not Hallelujah. I read through and I have to tell you, I was convicted. I said, "Lord, if I'm not careful I will have trusted You more in 1971 than I trust You in 2017." I got on my face and I said, "Dear God, I bring everything I've got and I give it to you because to whom much is given, much is required." Friend, that's not just true for you and it's not just true for me. It's true for us collectively as a church. What God's given us we are required to do something with it.

I hope when we get there, we can have a church reunion and we can all get together with all the deacons and everybody that's been the pastor. We can look around and see if the Lord's going to give us any fine linen. Then we'll sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

What do you eat? Not manna. No, sir. Not manna. God will meet our need. Don't be cowering over in the corner saying, "O Lord, I wish I'd have done something." Fine linen. Trust Him. When Jon sings this song, I want you to come down here and get saved and I want you to trust Him.