October 2, 2022 Listen to this Message ... Revelation 1-3

Welcome - Bruce

Call to Worship (from Revelation 1:5-6) - team

Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come; from the sevenfold Spirit before his throne; and from Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness to these things, the first to rise from the dead, and the ruler of all the kings of the world.

All glory to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us. He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

Song 1: Crown Him with Many Crowns

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Today we will read through all seven letters Jesus sends to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3. Just to remind ourselves of the context, let's hear again the words of Revelation, chapter 1:

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When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw seven gold lampstands. And standing in the middle of the lampstands was someone like the Son of Man. He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow.

And his eyes were like flames of fire. His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves. He held seven

stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth. And his face was like the sun in all its brilliance.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. I died, but look — I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.

"Write down what you have seen—both the things that are now happening and the things that will happen. This is the meaning of the mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and the seven gold lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Revelation, Chapter 2, Verses 1-7

Write this to Ephesus, to the Angel of the church. The One with Seven Stars in his right hand, striding through the seven golden lampstands, speaks:

"I see what you've done, your hard, hard work, your refusal to quit. I know you can't stomach evil, that you weed out religious pretenders. I know your persistence, your courage in my cause, that you never wear out.

"But you walked away from your first love — why? What's going on with you, anyway? Do you have any idea how far you've fallen?

Turn back! Recover your dear first love. No time to waste, for I'm well on my way to removing your light from the golden circle.

"You do have this to your credit: You hate the Nicolaitan business, those who compromise their faith to worship idols and indulge in sexual immorality. I hate it, too.

"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. I'm about to call each conqueror to dinner. I'm spreading a banquet of Tree-of-Life fruit, a feast prepared from God's glorious orchard."

Song 2: Lord Have Mercy

Revelation, Chapter 2, Verses 8-11

Write this to Smyrna, to the Angel of the church. The Beginning and Ending, the First and Final One, the Once Dead and Then Come Alive, speaks:

"I can see your pain and poverty — constant pain, dire poverty — but I also see your inner, spiritual wealth. And I hear the lie in the claims of those who pretend to be good Jews, who in fact belong to Satan's crowd.

"Fear nothing in the things you're about to suffer — but stay on guard! Fear nothing! The Devil is about to throw you in jail for a time of testing — ten days. It won't last forever.

"Don't quit, even if it costs you your life. Stay there believing. I have a Crown of Life sized and ready for you.

"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. Christ-conquerors will overcome the power of death itself."

Song 3: I Choose to Worship

Kids' Moment: Mark (both)

Revelation, Chapter 2, Verses 12-17

Write this to Pergamum, to the Angel of the church. This is the message from the one with the sharp two-edged sword:

"I see where you live, right under the shadow of Satan's throne. But you continue boldly in my Name. You never once denied my Name, even when the pressure was worst, when they martyred Antipas, my witness who stayed faithful to me on Satan's turf.

"But why do you indulge that Balaam crowd? Don't you remember that Balaam was an enemy agent, seducing Balak and sabotaging Israel's holy pilgrimage by throwing unholy parties?

"And why do you put up with the Nicolaitans, who do the same thing? They lead you astray to worship idols and indulge your lusts.

"Enough! Don't give in to them. I'll be with you soon. I'm fed up and about to cut them to pieces with my sword-sharp words.

"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. I'll give the sacred bread of life to every conqueror. I'll also give a clear, smooth stone inscribed with your new name, your secret new name."

Revelation, Chapter 2, Verses 18-29

Write this to Thyatira, to the Angel of the church. God's Son, eyes blazing with fire, standing on feet of furnace-fired bronze, says this:

"I see everything you're doing for me. Impressive! The love and the faith, the service and persistence. Yes, very impressive! You get better at it every day.

"But I have this complaint against you. You are permitting that woman — that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet — to lead my servants astray. She teaches them to commit sexual sin and to eat food offered to idols.

"I gave her time to repent, but she does not want to turn away from her immorality. Therefore, I will throw her on a bed of suffering, and those who commit adultery with her will suffer greatly unless they repent and turn away from her evil deeds.

"I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am the one who searches out the thoughts and intentions of every person. And I will give to each of you whatever you deserve.

"The rest of you Thyatirans, who have nothing to do with this outrage, who scorn this playing around with the Devil that gets paraded as profundity, be assured I'll not make life any harder for you than it already is. Hold on to the truth you have until I get there.

"Here's the reward I have for every conqueror, everyone who keeps at it, refusing to give up: You'll rule the nations, your Shepherd-King rule as firm as an iron staff, their resistance fragile as clay pots. This was the gift my Father gave me; I pass it along to you — and with it, the Morning Star!

"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches."

Song 4: Yes and Amen

Revelation, Chapter 3, Verses 1-6

Write this to Sardis, to the Angel of the church. The One holding the Seven Spirits of God in one hand, a firm grip on the Seven Stars with the other, speaks:

"I see right through your work. You have a reputation for vigor and zest and life, but you're dead, stone-dead.

"Up on your feet! Take a deep breath! Maybe there's life in you yet. But I wouldn't know it by looking at your busywork; nothing of God's work has been completed. Your condition is desperate. Think of the gift you once had in your hands, the Message you heard with your ears — grasp it again and turn back to God.

"If you pull the covers back over your head and sleep on, oblivious to God, I'll return when you least expect it, break into your life like a thief in the night.

"You still have a few followers of Jesus in Sardis who haven't ruined themselves wallowing in the muck of the world's ways. They'll walk with me on parade! They've proved their worth!

"Conquerors will march in the victory parade, their names indelible in the Book of Life. I'll lead them up and present them by name to my Father and his Angels.

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SONG 5: Pass Me Not

Revelation, Chapter 3, Verses 7-13

Write this to Philadelphia, to the Angel of the church. The Holy One, the True One — the One with David's key in his hand, who opens doors no one can lock, and locks doors no one can open … the Holy One speaks:

"I see what you've done. Now see what I've done. I've opened a door before you that no one can slam shut. You don't have much strength, I know that; you used what you had to keep my Word. You didn't deny me when times were rough.

"And watch as I take those who call themselves true believers but are nothing of the kind, pretenders whose true membership is in the club of Satan — watch as I strip off their pretensions and they're forced to acknowledge it's you that I've loved.

"Because you kept my Word in passionate endurance, I'll keep you safe in the time of testing that will be here soon, and all over the earth, every man, woman, and child put to the test.

"I'm on my way. I'll be there soon. Keep a tight grip on what you have so no one distracts you and steals your crown.

"I'll make each conqueror a pillar in the Temple of my God, a permanent position of honor. Then I'll write names on you, the pillars: the Name of my God, the Name of God's City — the new Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven — and my new Name.

"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches."

PRAYER: Mark/Kyle

SONG 6: O Love That Will Not Let me Go

Revelation, Chapter 3, Verses 14-22

Write to Laodicea, to the Angel of the church. God's Yes, the Faithful and True Witness, who was before the beginning of God's creation, says:

"I know you inside and out, and find little to my liking. You're not cold, you're not hot — far better to be either cold or hot! You're lukewarm. You're stale. You're stagnant. I will spit you out of my mouth.

"You brag, 'I'm rich, I've got it made, I need nothing from anyone,' oblivious that in fact you're a pitiful, blind beggar, threadbare and homeless.

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"And watch as I take those who call themselves true believers but are nothing of the kind, pretenders whose true membership is in the club of Satan — watch as I strip off their pretensions and they're forced to acknowledge it's you that I've loved.

"Because you kept my Word in passionate endurance, I'll keep you safe in the time of testing that will be here soon, and all over the earth, every man, woman, and child put to the test.

"I'm on my way. I'll be there soon. Keep a tight grip on what you have so no one distracts you and steals your crown.

"I'll make each conqueror a pillar in the Temple of my God, a permanent position of honor. Then I'll write names on you, the pillars: the Name of my God, the Name of God's City — the new Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven — and my new Name.

"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches."

PRAYER: Mark/Kyle

SONG 6: O Love That Will Not Let me Go

Revelation, Chapter 3, Verses 14-22

Write to Laodicea, to the Angel of the church. God's Yes, the Faithful and True Witness, who was before the beginning of God's creation, says:

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"You brag, 'I'm rich, I've got it made, I need nothing from anyone,' oblivious that in fact you're a pitiful, blind beggar, threadbare and homeless.

"Here's what I want you to do: Buy your gold from me, gold that's been through the refiner's fire. Then you'll be rich. Buy your clothes from me, clothes designed in Heaven. You've gone around half-naked long enough. And buy medicine for your eyes from me so you can see, really see.

"The people I love, I call to account — prod and correct and guide so that they'll live at their best. Up on your feet, then! About face! Run after God!

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SONG 7: Refiner's Fire

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Benediction

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Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come; from the sevenfold Spirit before his throne; and from Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness to these things, the first to rise from the dead, and the ruler of all the kings of the world.

All glory to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us. He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

Song 1: Crown Him with Many Crowns

Introduction - Bruce

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And his eyes were like flames of fire. His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves. He held seven

stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth. And his face was like the sun in all its brilliance.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. I died, but look — I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.

"Write down what you have seen—both the things that are now happening and the things that will happen. This is the meaning of the mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and the seven gold lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Revelation, Chapter 2, Verses 1-7

Write this to Ephesus, to the Angel of the church. The One with Seven Stars in his right hand, striding through the seven golden lampstands, speaks:

"I see what you've done, your hard, hard work, your refusal to quit. I know you can't stomach evil, that you weed out religious pretenders. I know your persistence, your courage in my cause, that you never wear out.

"But you walked away from your first love — why? What's going on with you, anyway? Do you have any idea how far you've fallen?

Turn back! Recover your dear first love. No time to waste, for I'm well on my way to removing your light from the golden circle.

"You do have this to your credit: You hate the Nicolaitan business, those who compromise their faith to worship idols and indulge in sexual immorality. I hate it, too.

"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. I'm about to call each conqueror to dinner. I'm spreading a banquet of Tree-of-Life fruit, a feast prepared from God's glorious orchard."

Song 2: Lord Have Mercy

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Write this to Smyrna, to the Angel of the church. The Beginning and Ending, the First and Final One, the Once Dead and Then Come Alive, speaks:

"I can see your pain and poverty — constant pain, dire poverty — but I also see your inner, spiritual wealth. And I hear the lie in the claims of those who pretend to be good Jews, who in fact belong to Satan's crowd.

"Fear nothing in the things you're about to suffer — but stay on guard! Fear nothing! The Devil is about to throw you in jail for a time of testing — ten days. It won't last forever.

"Don't quit, even if it costs you your life. Stay there believing. I have a Crown of Life sized and ready for you.

"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. Christ-conquerors will overcome the power of death itself."

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Kids' Moment: Mark (both)

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"But why do you indulge that Balaam crowd? Don't you remember that Balaam was an enemy agent, seducing Balak and sabotaging Israel's holy pilgrimage by throwing unholy parties?

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"Enough! Don't give in to them. I'll be with you soon. I'm fed up and about to cut them to pieces with my sword-sharp words.

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Write this to Thyatira, to the Angel of the church. God's Son, eyes blazing with fire, standing on feet of furnace-fired bronze, says this:

"I see everything you're doing for me. Impressive! The love and the faith, the service and persistence. Yes, very impressive! You get better at it every day.

"But I have this complaint against you. You are permitting that woman — that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet — to lead my servants astray. She teaches them to commit sexual sin and to eat food offered to idols.

"I gave her time to repent, but she does not want to turn away from her immorality. Therefore, I will throw her on a bed of suffering, and those who commit adultery with her will suffer greatly unless they repent and turn away from her evil deeds.

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"Up on your feet! Take a deep breath! Maybe there's life in you yet. But I wouldn't know it by looking at your busywork; nothing of God's work has been completed. Your condition is desperate. Think of the gift you once had in your hands, the Message you heard with your ears — grasp it again and turn back to God.

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"I gave her time to repent, but she does not want to turn away from her immorality. Therefore, I will throw her on a bed of suffering, and those who commit adultery with her will suffer greatly unless they repent and turn away from her evil deeds.

"I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am the one who searches out the thoughts and intentions of every person. And I will give to each of you whatever you deserve.

"The rest of you Thyatirans, who have nothing to do with this outrage, who scorn this playing around with the Devil that gets paraded as profundity, be assured I'll not make life any harder for you than it already is. Hold on to the truth you have until I get there.

"Here's the reward I have for every conqueror, everyone who keeps at it, refusing to give up: You'll rule the nations, your Shepherd-King rule as firm as an iron staff, their resistance fragile as clay pots. This was the gift my Father gave me; I pass it along to you — and with it, the Morning Star!

"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches."

Song 4: Yes and Amen

Revelation, Chapter 3, Verses 1-6

Write this to Sardis, to the Angel of the church. The One holding the Seven Spirits of God in one hand, a firm grip on the Seven Stars with the other, speaks:

"I see right through your work. You have a reputation for vigor and zest and life, but you're dead, stone-dead.

"Up on your feet! Take a deep breath! Maybe there's life in you yet. But I wouldn't know it by looking at your busywork; nothing of God's work has been completed. Your condition is desperate. Think of the gift you once had in your hands, the Message you heard with your ears — grasp it again and turn back to God.

"If you pull the covers back over your head and sleep on, oblivious to God, I'll return when you least expect it, break into your life like a thief in the night.

"You still have a few followers of Jesus in Sardis who haven't ruined themselves wallowing in the muck of the world's ways. They'll walk with me on parade! They've proved their worth!

"Conquerors will march in the victory parade, their names indelible in the Book of Life. I'll lead them up and present them by name to my Father and his Angels.

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SONG 5: Pass Me Not

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Write this to Philadelphia, to the Angel of the church. The Holy One, the True One — the One with David's key in his hand, who opens doors no one can lock, and locks doors no one can open … the Holy One speaks:

"I see what you've done. Now see what I've done. I've opened a door before you that no one can slam shut. You don't have much strength, I know that; you used what you had to keep my Word. You didn't deny me when times were rough.

"And watch as I take those who call themselves true believers but are nothing of the kind, pretenders whose true membership is in the club of Satan — watch as I strip off their pretensions and they're forced to acknowledge it's you that I've loved.

"Because you kept my Word in passionate endurance, I'll keep you safe in the time of testing that will be here soon, and all over the earth, every man, woman, and child put to the test.

"I'm on my way. I'll be there soon. Keep a tight grip on what you have so no one distracts you and steals your crown.

"I'll make each conqueror a pillar in the Temple of my God, a permanent position of honor. Then I'll write names on you, the pillars: the Name of my God, the Name of God's City — the new Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven — and my new Name.

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PRAYER: Mark/Kyle

SONG 6: O Love That Will Not Let me Go

Revelation, Chapter 3, Verses 14-22

Write to Laodicea, to the Angel of the church. God's Yes, the Faithful and True Witness, who was before the beginning of God's creation, says:

"I know you inside and out, and find little to my liking. You're not cold, you're not hot — far better to be either cold or hot! You're lukewarm. You're stale. You're stagnant. I will spit you out of my mouth.

"You brag, 'I'm rich, I've got it made, I need nothing from anyone,' oblivious that in fact you're a pitiful, blind beggar, threadbare and homeless.

"Here's what I want you to do: Buy your gold from me, gold that's been through the refiner's fire. Then you'll be rich. Buy your clothes from me, clothes designed in Heaven. You've gone around half-naked long enough. And buy medicine for your eyes from me so you can see, really see.

"The people I love, I call to account — prod and correct and guide so that they'll live at their best. Up on your feet, then! About face! Run after God!

"Look at me. I stand at the door. I knock. If you hear me call and open the door, I'll come right in and sit down to supper with you. Conquerors will sit alongside me at the head table, just as I, having conquered, took the place of honor at the side of my Father. That's my gift to the conquerors!

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SONG 7: Refiner's Fire

Communion

SONG 8: Light the Fire Again

Benediction

October 2, 2022 Listen to this Message ... Revelation 1-3

Welcome - Bruce

Call to Worship (from Revelation 1:5-6) - team

Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come; from the sevenfold Spirit before his throne; and from Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness to these things, the first to rise from the dead, and the ruler of all the kings of the world.

All glory to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us. He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

Song 1: Crown Him with Many Crowns

Introduction - Bruce

Today we will read through all seven letters Jesus sends to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3. Just to remind ourselves of the context, let's hear again the words of Revelation, chapter 1:

"This letter is from John to the seven churches in the province of Asia ...

It was the Lord's Day, and I was worshiping in the Spirit. Suddenly, I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet blast. It said, "Write in a book everything you see, and send it to the seven churches in the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."

When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw seven gold lampstands. And standing in the middle of the lampstands was someone like the Son of Man. He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow.

And his eyes were like flames of fire. His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves. He held seven

stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth. And his face was like the sun in all its brilliance.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. I died, but look — I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.

"Write down what you have seen—both the things that are now happening and the things that will happen. This is the meaning of the mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and the seven gold lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Revelation, Chapter 2, Verses 1-7

Write this to Ephesus, to the Angel of the church. The One with Seven Stars in his right hand, striding through the seven golden lampstands, speaks:

"I see what you've done, your hard, hard work, your refusal to quit. I know you can't stomach evil, that you weed out religious pretenders. I know your persistence, your courage in my cause, that you never wear out.

"But you walked away from your first love — why? What's going on with you, anyway? Do you have any idea how far you've fallen?

Turn back! Recover your dear first love. No time to waste, for I'm well on my way to removing your light from the golden circle.

"You do have this to your credit: You hate the Nicolaitan business, those who compromise their faith to worship idols and indulge in sexual immorality. I hate it, too.

"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. I'm about to call each conqueror to dinner. I'm spreading a banquet of Tree-of-Life fruit, a feast prepared from God's glorious orchard."

Song 2: Lord Have Mercy

Revelation, Chapter 2, Verses 8-11

Write this to Smyrna, to the Angel of the church. The Beginning and Ending, the First and Final One, the Once Dead and Then Come Alive, speaks:

"I can see your pain and poverty — constant pain, dire poverty — but I also see your inner, spiritual wealth. And I hear the lie in the claims of those who pretend to be good Jews, who in fact belong to Satan's crowd.

"Fear nothing in the things you're about to suffer — but stay on guard! Fear nothing! The Devil is about to throw you in jail for a time of testing — ten days. It won't last forever.

"Don't quit, even if it costs you your life. Stay there believing. I have a Crown of Life sized and ready for you.

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Song 3: I Choose to Worship

Kids' Moment: Mark (both)

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Write this to Pergamum, to the Angel of the church. This is the message from the one with the sharp two-edged sword:

"I see where you live, right under the shadow of Satan's throne. But you continue boldly in my Name. You never once denied my Name, even when the pressure was worst, when they martyred Antipas, my witness who stayed faithful to me on Satan's turf.

"But why do you indulge that Balaam crowd? Don't you remember that Balaam was an enemy agent, seducing Balak and sabotaging Israel's holy pilgrimage by throwing unholy parties?

"And why do you put up with the Nicolaitans, who do the same thing? They lead you astray to worship idols and indulge your lusts.

"Enough! Don't give in to them. I'll be with you soon. I'm fed up and about to cut them to pieces with my sword-sharp words.

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Write this to Thyatira, to the Angel of the church. God's Son, eyes blazing with fire, standing on feet of furnace-fired bronze, says this:

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