

`The Alpha and Omega
Rev. 22:13

Good morning! The start of the year has been quite unpleasant as we all know. First, there are the devastating bushfires in Australia, then the Taal Volcano eruption, then the CoronaVirus flu outbreak, then the tragic death of Kobe Bryant and 8 other people, then the infighting in the US Senate because of the impeachment trial of President Trump. So, what next?

All this tells us that in this life there is nothing certain. Good can turn to bad in the wink of an eye. Life is largely unpredictable. Yesterday afternoon, I was watching, well kind of, because I was taking a peek at an Amazon Prime movie which Ally was watching while I was preparing my sermon. It was quite interesting. It was the story of a guy who went back in time several times by taking a shot of whiskey in the hopes of preventing the break-up of his relationship with his girlfriend. The title is “Unli Life”, a drama-comedy Filipino movie starring Vhong Navarro and Joey Marquez. There is one scene in the movie where Vhong was lamenting the fact that he wasn’t able to prevent the death of his mother because of an accident when he went back in time as a kid. And Joey, the bartender/counselor, shared a wise thought, “In this journey, it’s a different story, when it comes to life and death. The only thing permanent is the birth and death of a person.”

Isn’t that true? When a woman becomes pregnant, for sure she’s going to give birth. It’s inevitable. Like Hannah who gave birth to Isabelle a couple of days ago. Her due date is actually two weeks from now but she couldn’t stop the baby from coming out, she couldn’t tell Marco, “No, no, don’t bring me to the hospital. I’m not due yet.”

And death? Yes, we are all bound to die. Even those who claimed to have come back from the dead, they have died too afterwards. The mortality rate of man cais still 100%. Exceptions are Enoch and Elijah in the Bible who were taken by God

Folks, nothing in life is permanent. Life is in a constant state of flux. You don't know what happens next. You may be enjoying it good now, and later on, you hear bad news. It affects you emotionally and mentally and even physically.

I remember a story I read about Vladimir Putin when he visited the US years ago. One day, he was visiting a school. In one class, he asks the students if anyone can give him an example of a "tragedy." One little boy stands up and says, "If my best friend who lives next door is playing in the street when a car came by and killed him, that would be a tragedy."

"No," Putin says, "That would be an ACCIDENT."

A girl raises her hand. "If a school bus carrying fifty children drove off a cliff, killing everyone inside ... that would be a tragedy."

"I'm afraid not," explains Putin. "That is what we would call a GREAT LOSS."

The room is silent; none of the other children dare volunteer.

"What?" asks Putin, "Isn't there anyone here who can give me an example of a tragedy?"

Finally, Little Johnny in the back raises his hand. In a timid voice, he says: "If an airplane carrying Mr. and Mrs. Putin was blown up by a bomb, *that* would be a tragedy."

"Wonderful!" Putin beams. "Marvelous! And can you tell me WHY that would be a tragedy?"

"Well," says Johnny, "because it wouldn't be an accident, and it certainly would be no great loss!"

I just wanted you to laugh a little bit because you all look so serious. But we can't deny the fact that life can be a series of accidents, great losses, and tragedies. Some of you have been through it, and some of you are going through it. And some of you will be going through it. That's life. That's why we need to stay steady. We need to keep our feet planted on the ground. We need to have a firm foundation.

How do we do that? How does that happen? It doesn't happen by accident. It comes with becoming fully aware and admitting that we are helpless in the midst of terrible circumstances and recognizing that there is one person who can help us in our journey. That person is Jesus Christ.

In the Bible, he is referred to as the Alpha and the Omega. Let us all read this passage from Rev. 22:13, where Jesus says **"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."**

We are on the fourth part of our series on the titles of Jesus. That verse we read gives us three titles of Jesus but they all mean the same thing. It's repeated three times in different words just so we wouldn't lose sight of the fact that Jesus Christ is all in all. He is everything. That's what it means, in short.

Btw, I don't know whether you remember that I actually preached on this subject before, last year actually. I remembered it only yesterday and I was tempted to preach the same thing but I didn't want to plagiarize myself and so I thought I'd extend what I shared with you before. In my message last year, my primary points were Jesus is Complete, Jesus is Eternal, and Jesus is Authoritative. Today, I'd like to tackle three qualities of Jesus which are embodied in the Alpha and Omega title. These are: Jesus is All-Powerful, Jesus is All-Knowing, and Jesus is All-Present. For the theologically minded, you would recognize these as Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent.

Now, we just entered the Love month. It's February and it's time for us to love our wives. Amen? Actually, this message could be a Valentine message about them because whether you like it or not sometimes they exhibit the qualities of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. You know, after 16 years of marriage, I now realize that my wife is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-present. I mean, she tells me to bring out the trash, and I can't say "No". That's power. One time I came home late from work and immediately she said, "I know where you've been. You went to Microcenter, didn't you?" She was right. How do they know these things? And many times she would go to work then be able to attend Ally's orientation in school and then go to Eza's school activity and a dozen more and I just wonder how she could do all these things all at the same time it seems. I'm just amazed at the many things she can accomplish in a day.

Anyway, going back to our topic, I'd like to share with you how the love of Jesus for each of us shines through in his three qualities of all-powerful, all-knowing, and being present everywhere at once.

Let me start with "All-knowing".

1. Jesus is All-Knowing.

He is omniscient. You know, **Alpha and Omega** are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The lingua franca during the time of Jesus was Greek and so the apostle John wrote Revelation in Greek. If he wrote it today, he would have written, "I am the A and the Z." In everyday language, when we say "A to Z" we mean something is complete, everything is there. Just like Amazon. How many of you are Amazon Prime Members? I'm a member. Many people become members because they know that Amazon knows their every need. That's what the logo of **Amazon** means. And I know you know that. That line underneath starts at A then extends to Z. Amazon has a humongous database. It contains important

information about every product they have and it seems that they have all the products we need and want. In a sense, Amazon is all-knowing.

But that's where the analogy ends. Because Amazon caters only to your physical needs not your spiritual needs. Or even emotional needs. Amazon doesn't know that. Amazon cannot fill the heart's desire, the longing of the soul. Amazon, like any business, is in it for the money. Not for your total well-being. It doesn't care for you. You exist only as a number.

Jesus is your God who truly knows you. The Psalmist says in Psalm 139 beginning verse 1, and please turn to this passage in your Bibles (read till verse 6). If you continue to read up to verse 18 you'll see just how much God knows you intimately.

Jesus is your God who is not distant nor far away. He is personal. What could be more personal than God coming down to earth in order to for us to know him in a personal way? He came to earth and personally touched each person. He had a personal relationship with his parents, with his disciples, with people around him. He went around healing people, giving sight to the blind, making the lame walk, opening the ears of the deaf, and raising people from the dead. Why did he do those things? He could have died for us without doing those things. It's because Jesus knows the longing of every person's heart. Every person in this world is longing for love. We live in an imperfect world. We encounter imperfect people and many times we get mistreated, rejected, criticized, abused, and what-not. Or we ourselves can be hard on other people. Some of us are living in shame or guilt or regret. Many of us are just emotionally beaten. And we are afraid.

Jesus knows all this. That's why when the paralyzed man was brought down from the roof by his friends, the first words from Jesus were, "Your sins are forgiven". He healed his heart first before he healed his body.

Do you have a need this morning? Jesus knows that need and he is ready to meet that need. He can be your shepherd, someone who cares for you intimately.

In fact, Jesus compares himself to a shepherd. In John 10:14, he says, “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.”

Do you know Jesus? If not, he could be the best person you’ll ever know. If you don’t, please hang on as I try some more to make Jesus known to you. And later on, you can make a decision whether to make him your shepherd or not.

As Alpha and Omega, Jesus is All-Knowing. Also,

2. Jesus is All-Present.

When Jesus says he is the Alpha and Omega, he doesn’t mean like those two letters are distinct from one another. I believe the idea that Jesus wants to convey is that Alpha and Omega are intertwined, meaning, he wants us to see that these two letters are one, existing at the same time and place. In other words, he is saying that he is not bound by space and time. And because he is not bound by space and time, he knows the beginning and the end. In other words, he knows your past, present, and future, and he will be with you in every step you take in your journey in life.

For example, right now, some of us are probably anxious or worried because of the recent terrible events occurring around the world. Are these the end times? Is Jesus coming soon? The fact is, we are faced with difficulties and crisis and if Jesus delays, we need strength to face these things. For some of us, our difficulties may be more personal. Our finances are tight. We have health issues. Our relationship is broken. Our kids are messing up. We are messing up. So, we terribly need the assurance of God’s presence in our lives.

Earlier, I mentioned Jesus knows everything. That’s reassuring...to a point. Because if Jesus only knew without doing something about what he knows, then it’s worthless. That’s why as I said earlier, he came to earth to be with us. Now that he is in heaven, Jesus is still with us. He is present everywhere, remember? If Jesus

is your Lord and Savior, he lives in your heart. His Holy Spirit is within you. He said to his disciples before he was arrested and crucified, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth...But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.” (John 14:16-17)

The Spirit of truth is the Holy Spirit as Jesus explains in verse 26, “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

What this means for you if you’re a Christian is that you are not alone. Jesus is always with you. In fact, the Bible says in Hebrews 13:15 that Jesus will never leave you nor forsake you.

Last week, at the office, my whole team had a meeting. We just finished our two-week sprint. A sprint is a term used in the IT world to refer to a period of time when everyone is supposed to finish the tasks assigned to them during that period of time. Usually, it is two weeks. After a sprint, you proceed to the next sprint. In our case, our project was supposed to end and we’re supposed to deliver our finished project after 6 sprints. Anyway, we just ended third Sprint two Fridays ago.

So, everyone was seated, and everyone was looking at the projector screen and I looked at it and to my horror, there is one task assigned to me that I didn’t finish. I panicked. I felt like there was a volcanic eruption and a bushfire at the same time. I totally forgot about that task. For sure, my manager will ask me about it and what will I say. I don’t want to say “I forgot” because it meant I wasn’t responsible enough. The good thing is that I was second in line and so I had some time to come up with an excuse. I prayed but I didn’t get any revelation from God. My mind was totally blank. While the manager and the first in line were discussing, I saw that our scrum master, he’s the guy who assigns tasks and was

controlling the Excel spreadsheet, had the cursor now pointed to my name on the screen. And I just prayed hard that God would give me the words.

Normally, I would be suddenly inspired and then know what to say at the last minute. But not this time because words still escaped me.

Then, it was my turn. The manager asked the scrum master to scroll up a bit to look at something he missed then the scrum master scrolled down until it reached my task but to my great surprise, he kept on scrolling down until the cursor stopped at another task that was after me. He and my manager completely missed me. How could that be?

After our meeting, I thought that I would ask my manager why he went past me. But I decided against it. It wasn't a good idea. One thing I'm sure. Jesus was with me in that room. Jesus took care of my worries. Jesus let me escape a difficult situation.

This is Jesus promise, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) And in Matthew 28:20b, he assures you, "...surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

(Call RJ to recite poem)

As Alpha and Omega, Jesus is All-Knowing. Jesus is All-Present, and
3. Jesus is All-Powerful.

Do you know that Alpha and Omega are two letters that denote power and strength? Alpha is derived from the Semitic Aleph and aleph means "Ox". And as we know, the ox is a beast of burden. It is a very strong animal. Oxen are used for plowing, for transport like pulling carts, hauling wagons, for powering machines that grind grain or supply irrigation and so many other labor-intensive tasks.

Meanwhile, Omega means "great O". It is the capital letter O. There is a small "O" letter in Greek which is omicron. So, we use mega for things or objects that are great or huge or connote power like megamall, megachurch, megaphone,

megabyte. If you're popular, you're a megastar. If you're obsessed with power, you're a megalomaniac.

So you combine those two, Alpha and Omega, that's superpower. That is Jesus. He holds all power in the universe. He is the creator after all.

In Revelation 1:8, Jesus introduces himself to John, "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

This is one verse that certain pseudo-Christian religions deny as applying to Jesus. Because they say that only God the Father is Almighty and Jesus is just mighty like in Isaiah 9:6 where it says, "His name will be called Counselor, Mighty God". And I bought that and I became a member of a cult. After two years, I found out that's not true because "mighty" is also applied to God the Father. Like in Psalm 50:1, "The Mighty One, God, the Lord, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to where it sets."

So, as God incarnate, Jesus Christ is omnipotent. His power is seen in the miracles He performed—His numerous healings, the feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:30-44), calming the storm (Mark 4:37-41), and the ultimate display of power, raising Lazarus and Jairus's daughter from the dead (John 11:38-44; Mark 5:35-43), an example of His control over life and death.

And you know, death is the ultimate reason that Jesus came—to destroy it (1 Corinthians 15:22; Hebrews 2:14) and to bring sinners into a right relationship with God. The Lord Jesus stated clearly that He had power to lay down His life and power to take it up again. He also asserted that he had power to call upon twelve legions of angels to rescue Him during His trial, if needed (Matthew 26:53), yet He offered Himself in humility in place of others (Philippians 2:1-11).

The great mystery is that this power can be shared by believers who are united to God in Jesus Christ. Paul says, "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly

about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" (2 Corinthians 12:9b).

God's power is exalted in us most when our weaknesses are greatest because He "is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us" (Ephesians 3:20). It is God's power that continues to hold us in a state of grace despite our sin (2 Timothy 1:12), and by His power we are kept from falling (Jude 24).

Friend, do you feel like power has gone out of you? Why don't you tap that source of power that never ceases? You might feel powerless at the moment because of your troubles and pain but Jesus' never-ending supply of power can be yours if only you will trust in him.