

Maranatha is an Aramaic word found only once in Scripture. It is often translated as “Our Lord, come” or, “Our Lord is coming.” The first translation can be interpreted as a plea for Christ to speed His return, and the latter is an affirmation of our faith that Christ’s second coming is both certain and imminent. We find the word in the concluding remarks of Paul’s first letter to the believers in Corinth. However, at first glance, we may find ourselves flinching at what seems to be a rather harsh word.

*If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed! Come, Lord!  
(1 Corinthians 16:22 NIV)*

Wow! What a far cry from how we encounter the deep longing expressed in the chorus of Dominique Bradley’s song, *Maranatha*:

**MARANATHA, REST UPON OUR WEARY SOULS.  
GREAT REVIVER, JESUS, COME.  
OUR HEARTS ARE READY TO RECEIVE THE GRACE YOU GIVE.  
O COME, LORD JESUS, COME.  
O COME, LORD JESUS, COME.**

Certainly, the first-generation Christians lived in a context where they firmly believed the second coming of Christ was both imminent and anticipated. Brutal persecution from outside the community of faith, coupled with infighting a bickering within the fellowship, created a crisis of faith for many. Paul’s response to the church of his day was to encourage them to stand firm and stand together in the faith. He knew the “enemy of their souls” was eager to destroy and devour those who had found a renewed purpose and meaning for life through the gospel of Christ.

For us, *Maranatha* invites God into not only the quiet reflective places of our lives, but also into those spaces of grief and hurriedness where it is often more difficult to feel God’s presence. The song becomes an invitation for God to sanctify even those difficult spaces – coupled with an opportunity for us to intentionally seek God in those same moments.

The Apostle Paul’s declaration is then brought into perspective for us. As we experience the sanctifying presence of God in our lives, we are released from the curse of sin and death and are set apart (sanctified) to do God’s will and receive God’s grace.

O come, Lord Jesus, come!