

*Fr. Perozich comments —*

*My first reaction to the title, “Seven Critical Reasons You Should Receive Christ in 2026” was that this is protestant proselytism; I already have received Jesus in Baptism, Eucharist, Penance, Confirmation, Ordination.*

*Reading through, however, there is none of the theology of “once saved, always saved”, or a mere one time acceptance of Jesus Christ as “personal Lord and Savior.”*

*Rev. Mark Creech explains the time to receive Christ is now and over again.*

*He addresses those who have not known Jesus in word and sacrament.*

*He addresses us who do know Jesus in word and sacrament to RENEW our reception of Jesus in prayerful and personal way, to actively participate in the salvation that is given to us by Jesus.*

*Rev. Creech promotes the urgency because we know neither the day nor the hour either when Christ will come for us as individuals or when the Lord will come at the end of time.*

***Because Additional Time Is Not Guaranteed***

***Because the Heart Does Not Always Remain Neutral***

***Because the World is Increasingly Being Shaken***

***Because No Human Solution Can Heal the Human Condition***

***Because Christ is Nearer Than You May Think***

***Because Delay is the Devil’s Most Effective Strategy***

***Because 2026 May Be the Year God Appointed for You***

*The renewal then is not rooted in fear of punishment, rather in love by actively walking, talking, listening, and receiving Jesus each day in order to enjoy now as much of heaven until our glorious reception into paradise of us by Jesus at the end of time.*

**Seven critical reasons you  
should receive Christ in 2026**

By Rev. Mark H. Creech

January 3, 2026



Have you ever noticed the dash on a gravestone – that small line between the date of birth and the date of death? That single mark represents everything a person ever was: every hope, every fear, every love, every wound, every decision, every moment of obedience or resistance to God. Entire lives, reduced to a line.

That dash is time.

Once time passes, it can never be reclaimed.

There are moments in history when time itself seems to lean forward, pressing upon the conscience. A new year always carries that weight. Not because the calendar possesses magic, but because human life does. Each passing year is a narrowing of opportunity – a holy window in which heaven calls for a response. As 2026 opens before us, here are seven reasons why receiving Christ this year is not merely important – it is urgent.

## Because Additional Time Is Not Guaranteed

Most of us have witnessed it on a cold morning. Someone steps outside, exhales, and for just a moment their breath becomes visible — a small cloud suspended in the air. Then, almost before it can be noticed, it disappears.

That is the image Scripture chooses for human life: “*What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away*” (James 4:14).

Not a mountain.

Not a river.

But more like a breath on winter’s air.

Life does not fade slowly as we often imagine. It is here, it matters deeply, and then it is gone – often more suddenly than anyone expects.

Even now, with all our modern medicine and technology, the average human lifespan is still only about 78 or 79 years in the United States, and roughly 73 years worldwide. Measured against eternity, that is scarcely more than a breath.

Jesus once told a story about a man who had done very well for himself in life. His fields produced such an abundant harvest that his barns could no longer contain it. So, he made plans. He said within himself: “*This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry*” (Luke 12:18–19).

But God said to him: “*Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee...*” (Luke 12:20).

The man in the story was not condemned for being productive, nor even for being prosperous. He was blamed for believing that time belonged to him. He planned as though life were stable, controllable, and always long. He spoke to his own soul as though he were its owner. He assumed too much and

failed to prepare for his appointment with God. He forgot the ageless truth that yesterday is gone, and tomorrow is not promised. Thus, he went into eternity unprepared to meet God.

## **Because the Heart Does Not Always Remain Neutral**

Scripture repeatedly warns that **the human heart does not remain neutral. It is either being softened by obedience or hardened by resistance.** There is no middle ground.

The writer of Hebrews sounds the alarm with solemn urgency: *“Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts...”* (Hebrews 3:7–8).

A few verses later, he presses the warning even further: *“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily... lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin”* (Hebrews 3:12–13).

Zechariah describes the same slow tragedy of resistance: *“They refused to hearken... and made their hearts as an adamant stone”* (Zechariah 7:11–12).

The story of Pharaoh stands as a living parable of this danger. Again and again, God commanded him to let His people go. And again and again, Pharaoh refused. With each act of resistance, Scripture tells us his heart grew harder. **What began as stubborn pride slowly became spiritual paralysis. Eventually, the heart that would not yield was a heart that could not yield.**

That same danger confronts every soul. **Each time a person says “no” to God, the heart does not merely pause – it calcifies. Delay trains the conscience. Resistance reshapes the soul. What feels like patience today becomes paralysis tomorrow.**

**When a heart hardens long enough... it may reach the most tragic condition of all: never choosing Christ.**

**To refuse Christ is not merely to postpone salvation. It is to move steadily toward a condition in which surrender itself becomes almost impossible – and to remain in that state is to perish forever spiritually.**

## **Because the World is Increasingly Being Shaken**

We are living in an hour of unusual and growing instability. The structures people once trusted – political, economic, social, and moral – now feel fragile and unreliable. The sense of unease is everywhere.

Nations stand in rising tension. Wars spread beyond borders, and old alliances fracture. Economies stagger under inflation, debt, and market volatility. Families and communities fracture as shared moral ground collapses, and even the meaning of truth and identity is fiercely contested. Technology races ahead of wisdom, creating new powers humanity barely understands. Extreme weather affects more people with greater force, reminding us how vulnerable modern life truly is. Spiritually, many have abandoned the historic Christian faith, yet the hunger for meaning and hope has never been greater.

This is not simply a difficult season of history. It is a profound shaking of the world. It feels unstable because it is unstable – and no human system is capable of restoring the kind of security the human heart longs for and needs.

History is not drifting. It is moving. The direction it is moving gives enormous weight to the decision every soul must make. In this age, the question of where a person stands with God is not abstract. It is exceedingly urgent. **We desperately need to be in right relationship with Him, so that He can steady us, show us by His Word and Spirit how to navigate these hazardous times faithfully, and enable us**

**to face these troubles with wisdom, courage, and confidence in His guiding and benevolent hand.**

## **Because No Human Solution Can Heal the Human Condition**

The deepest problems of mankind are not political, economic, psychological, technological, or educational – they are spiritual. This means our most significant issues are not “out there.” They live within us.

**The human condition is not merely that people are uninformed, under-resourced, or oppressed. It is that we are fallen and sinful creatures.** The Bible teaches that every human being carries a malfunctioning spirit that no system, policy, or program can repair: a heart bent away from God, a conscience stained by guilt, and a soul alienated from its Maker.

This description is not theoretical. It is real. It is personal. It is your condition and mine.

This is why the world’s most outstanding achievements – wealth, knowledge, power, medicine, and technology – may improve circumstances but never cure the disease. They can lengthen life but cannot heal the soul. They can entertain the heart but can never satisfy it. They can sometimes restrain evil, but they cannot transform it.

**We need more than improvement. We need renewal.**

**Christ alone addresses the problem at its root.**

**He does not merely instruct the mind; He regenerates the heart.**

**He does not merely forgive mistakes; He removes the guilt.**

**He does not merely reform behavior; He creates a person anew.**

**He does not merely provide religion; He initiates a close and personal relationship with God.**

**Through the Cross, Christ reconciles man to God. Through His resurrection, He conquers death. Through His Holy Spirit, He renews the inner life. Through His kingdom, He offers a future no earthly system can provide.**

**Every alternative solution tries to build a better world while leaving the human heart unchanged.** The gospel begins by changing the heart – and from that change, a better life, and ultimately a redeemed world, finally emerges.

**This is why Christ is not one option among many. He is the only solution for the human condition. He is the answer every soul was created for.**

### **Because Christ is Nearer Than You May Think**

Christ is the Lord of history's beginning and end. Scripture teaches that He will return and establish His kingdom. Some will enter that kingdom. Others will be shut out. This is not myth or metaphor – it is the sober warning of Christ Himself.

The Bible also teaches that as this moment in history approaches, certain conditions will appear together on a global scale. Jesus called them “birth pains” – wars and rumors of wars, deception, lawlessness, spiritual confusion, and moral collapse (Matthew 24). Paul warned that the last days would be perilous, marked by self-centeredness, hostility toward what is good, and love for pleasure more than love for God (2 Timothy 3).

What makes our era striking is not that these conditions exist – they always have – but that they now exist everywhere at once and with increasing intensity. For the first time in human history, the technological, political, and cultural structures described in



biblical prophecy are not merely imaginable; they are visible and operating in real time.

We do not set dates. But Christ commanded us to read the signs. When the times themselves are sounding an alarm, His call to be ready becomes more urgent than ever: *“Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”* (Matthew 24:44)

The return of Christ is not a distant theological concept. It is an ever-approaching reality. From what we read in Biblical prophecy, it appears that Christ’s return is at hand and could happen any day.

**But there is another way Christ is near.**

**He is near you. He is present and engaged with the life of every soul reading these words.**

The Bible teaches that Christ came to bring God near to us. Yet from the beginning, human beings have tried to close that distance by their own efforts. We build religious systems, perform good works, observe rituals, repeat prayers, pursue moral improvement, and hope that somehow our sincerity will bridge the gap between ourselves and God. Every culture in history bears witness to this instinct.

But Scripture is unambiguous: that distance cannot be crossed by human effort. It is not merely a gap in behavior; it is a separation of nature. Sin has fractured our relationship with God, and no amount of knowledge, charity, or religious motion can repair it.

In *Romans 10:8–10*, the apostle Paul states with breathtaking clarity that Christ – and salvation – are near: *“The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*



In other words, Christ is not far away.

He is not hiding.

He is not unreachable.

Salvation is not a pilgrimage across continents, nor an achievement earned through many good works. It is near – because the living and resurrected Christ is near. **He is as near as the heart's surrender to Him and the mouth's confession of His Lordship.**

### **Because Delay is the Devil's Most Effective Strategy**

Hell is not filled with people who meant to reject Christ, but mostly with people who meant to decide later. But later is a fragile word. Later is the most dangerous place a soul can live.

There is a time-honored story I once used in a sermon that has stayed with me.

It tells of a meeting Satan supposedly called in hell. He gathered his chief advisors and said, "We must develop a strategy for causing as much heartache and destruction as possible among the people of the earth. What shall we do?"

One advisor rose and said, "O great lord of evil, let us tell them there is no heaven."

"No," replied the devil. "That trick is old and no longer very effective."

Another suggested, "Then let us tell them there is no hell."

"That may confuse some," the devil answered, "but it is still not strong enough."

Finally, a third voice spoke: "O great lord of deception, let us tell them that there is no hurry. Tell them they have plenty of time."

At that, the devil sprang to his feet. "That's it," he said. "A brilliant strategy. We will convince them there is no hurry – that the most important decisions in life can always be made later."

That strategy has ruined more souls than open unbelief ever could.

Not long ago, I was speaking with a man in a restaurant about his need to turn to Christ. He told me he did not feel ready and wanted to wait. I said to him, “You are as prepared as you will ever be the moment Christ calls you. If you have heard His call to give your life to Him, then you are ready to be saved right now.”

We do not come to the Lord Jesus when we think we have everything in order. **Christ calls us because everything about our lives is out of order, and only He can set it right. His call is always NOW – a call that demands response without hesitation or procrastination, lest the opportunity be lost.**

### **Because 2026 May Be the Year God Appointed for You**

God does not deal with humanity only in eras and movements. He deals with people in specific moments. Scripture is filled with them – a day when Noah entered the ark, an hour when Zacchaeus climbed the tree, a night when Nicodemus came searching, a moment when the thief on the cross heard the words, *“Today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).*

Those were not general invitations. They were divine appointments.

The Bible says, *“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).* **This year, for reasons known only to God, may be the season in which He is pressing His claim upon your heart. Not for the nation. Not for the world. But for you.**

**Postponing that moment is to gamble on the most critical decision of your life.**

Years ago, long before most people had ever heard the word “software,” a brilliant computer engineer named Gary Kildall developed one of the first operating systems for personal

computers. It was called CP/M, and for a time it dominated the emerging industry.

In 1980, IBM – the most powerful company in the world at that time – came to Kildall with an offer that would have changed his life. They wanted him to provide the operating system for their new line of personal computers. But when IBM's representatives arrived for their crucial meeting, Kildall snubbed them and didn't show up. He decided instead to go joyriding on his new airplane.

The opportunity of a lifetime came – and he missed it.

IBM turned to a young man running a small software company named Microsoft. His name was Bill Gates. Fourteen years later, Gates was worth billions. Kildall, though widely respected as a brilliant mind, never recovered the ground he lost.

One writer later observed of him, “He was a smart man who did not realize how large the operating system market would become.”

In much the same way, many people fail to grasp how great God's offer in Christ truly is. They do not understand how vast His kingdom will be one day. God comes calling with the most incredible opportunity ever availed – an opportunity beyond comparison, an offer of eternal life – and they, for whatever reason, unwisely, let their moment pass.

The year 2026 will be filled with ambition, distraction, conflict, noise, and promise. It will pass more quickly than anyone expects. And when it does, only one decision will matter.

**History is not drifting. It is moving toward a conclusion God has already written. Every human life is moving toward an encounter with its Creator.**

**Christ is near. His invitation is genuine. His mercy is open.**

**His call is nothing to procrastinate about.**

**Do not answer it later.**

**Do not assume tomorrow.**

**Do not trade eternity for delay.**

**Turn away from your sins. Receive Christ. In doing so, you will receive life more abundant and life eternal.**



### **Rev. Mark Creech**

Rev. Mark Creech is a longtime pastor and former executive director of the Christian Action League of North Carolina. He now writes and speaks on issues of faith and culture and heads government relations for Return America.

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