

Immanuel and the New Creation – Part 2

Revelation 21:1-8

Once again it is my joy to minister the Word of God to you this morning.

Will you take your Bibles and turn to Revelation chapter 21? We come, again, to these first eight verses as we continue to make our way through this amazing revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul tells us in Colossians three and verse two that we are to set our mind on the things above and not on the things of the earth. And I can think of no better way to do that than to focus on heaven this morning. And that is what we have as the theme of these verses.

Let me read them to you, Revelation chapter 21 beginning with verse one.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."
And He *said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."¹

We return again to this amazing text that speaks of our heavenly home. Jesus promised in John chapter 14 beginning in verse two:

In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.²

¹ Revelation 21:1-8.

² John 14:2-3.

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My friends, this is God's desire, to dwell with his people in his house. What an amazing thought. The Father's house, as Jesus described, is really a reference to his heavenly temple, the new Jerusalem where we will serve him day and night according to Revelation chapter seven and verse 15, the place where he will dwell amongst us as we just read in verse three, where we will behold the glory of his presence, where we will bask forever in the ineffable light of his shekinah.

The King James version is a poor translation here. It says, "In my Father's house are many mansions."³ No, there is only one house, one temple. It is the Lord. It is a sanctuary with many dwelling places where all of the saints will have equal access to God.

Some mistakenly see heaven as a place kind of like a mountain where God is all the way up at the top and there are mansions stationed in ascending order of size and proximity to God. But that is not at all what we find in Scripture. That is not at all what we see here in Revelation 21. Rather, the new Jerusalem will allow equal and simultaneous access for every believer into his holy presence, making possible unceasing worship and praise to occur as we as saint serve him as priests and as we traverse the infinite universe that he has created for purposes that we cannot imagine, doing things that we cannot imagine, resulting in a joy that we cannot comprehend.

May I remind you that after sin entered the garden God cursed creation. He cursed man. And from that day forward it was impossible for God to be able to dwell with man without destroying him with his holy presence. In fact, his presence is described as a consuming fire. In Exodus chapter 33 and verse 20 we read that, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"⁴

But because it has always been God's desire to dwell with man in sweet communion, he instructed his chosen people to build a sanctuary, a place where his consuming fire, his shekinah could dwell among men while at the same time still protecting man for his glory which was therefore concealed in the unlit inner sanctuary, in the inner chamber of the tabernacle and later on the temple.

But as we come to chapter 21 here in Revelation we learn that God is going to purge the heavens and the earth from sin with fire. He is going to vaporize it into absolute oblivion as we studied the last time we were together. Then he is going to create a new heaven and a new earth where sin does not exist, a place where man will be able to live with him in a glorified, resurrected body, a place where God will make possible for us to dwell in his presence, to see him face to face without any means of separation.

Beloved, that is what heaven is all about. The new Jerusalem will be a 1500 mile cubed city, an immense holy of holies that cannot be defiled from within because the curse is passed, nor will it be defiled from without because all of the potential desecraters have

³ John 14:2.

⁴ Exodus 33:20.

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been confined to the lake of fire. And this is the force of the loud voice from the throne that we read here in verse three of chapter 21. “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them.”⁵

So, beloved, as we prepare our minds and hearts this morning to look into these amazing passages of Scripture, may I remind you that one day we will dwell with God in this colossal sanctuary, a place where we will see him just as he is, as 1 John 3:2 tells us, the one who dwells, as Paul reminded us in 1 Timothy 6:6, in unapproachable light.

Now he is going to be approachable. We will bask in that light. We will commune with him. We will serve him. And, amazingly, according to our Lord’s parable in Luke chapter 12 God is actually going to serve us. Can you imagine that? Absolutely astounding. He will therefore commune with us as we commune with him.

But may I remind you again that John is now witnessing what he has earlier penned in 1 John 3:2? There he says, “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.”⁶

Now think about that for a moment, how true this is. It has not appeared as yet what we shall be. I hope not. I hope it will be more than this. Obviously it will be. And as we think about that concept, even as the glory of the incarnate Christ was concealed in the flesh of his humanness, so, too, our undeserved glory is likewise concealed. Even though we are his adopted sons, even though we are joint heirs with Jesus, the glory that is ours remains concealed until our resurrected state. We remain in the confines of our unredeemed humanness.

You might think of it like an ugly seed that needs to be put in the ground, a seed that needs to be planted. Likewise we await this transformation of our resurrected bodies. The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15 that we are sown a perishable body, but raised an imperishable body, sown in dishonor, but raised in glory, sown in weakness, but raised in power.

So one day, like that seed, we will rise from the ground and we will blossom like a stunning flower that will give forth the fragrance of holiness. We will rise from the dead in the image of Christ where we will dwell in the presence of God forevermore to the praise of his glory.

Then, as John went on to say, “When He appears, we will be like Him.”⁷ Why? He answers it and says, “Because we shall see Him just as He is.”⁸

⁵ Revelation 21:3.

⁶ 1 John 3:2.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

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Today we know little of the exhilarating joy of being like him. We experience little of that. Joy this side of heaven is short lived, isn't it? It is always clouded with some competing distraction or some difficulty. Have you ever been in a situation where you are just experiencing something great and fun and all of the sudden like a wave from nowhere something hits you and you are reminded of some difficult thing that you are going to have to do next week? It is always tainted, but not so when we will be like him. Then our joy will be complete.

You see, in this life we only get a glimpse of the glory of Christ. We get a glimpse of him through his Word. We get a glimpse of him through the fellowship with God's people, through singing praises to his name, through prayer and so forth. And whenever we gaze at him in these ways, the brightness of his glory, shall we say, shines upon us like looking into a mirror in the sunlight which reflects its brightness upon our face, like Moses you will recall who, in a very limited way was allowed to look upon deity on Mount Sinai and you will recall how the light of that reflection was so powerful that when he came down off the mount he had to cover his face with a veil in order for the people to even come near him.

Oh, dear Christian, think about it. How much more glorious will be our reflection when we are able to gaze upon the face of the living God? That is what heaven is all about. But today we still wait as John says. "It has not yet appeared as yet what we shall be."⁹ Think about it. We are sons of God by his grace, by his mercy. We are joint heirs with Jesus. We are rulers that will reign with him forever. Yet no one sees any of this in our life on earth. And we don't even see in ourselves completely. Nor did they see the majesty of the King of kings when he was here.

You see, once again, "It has not appeared as yet what we shall be."¹⁰ Why? Because, beloved, this world is not the realm of our unveiling. This earth is cursed. Its inhabitants are dead in sins. They are spiritually blind.

It is said that Roman citizens would climb to the tops of towers and trees and houses and any buildings they could and strain their eyes on the horizon to be able to get a glimpse of Caesar or some other triumphant general that was approaching Rome with the spoils of war of which they would all share. The spectacle of a Roman triumph, it was called, was something that was grand and glorious and it was nothing short of worship.

But think about it. When the King of glory, the Lord Jesus Christ arrived nobody was straining their eyes. Nobody was looking for him. Now, of course, he was veiled in the garments of humility. He was obscured and purposefully so. But no one was really looking for him. And even when he performed all of his marvelous miracles, even though people were absolutely astounded with the things that they saw, instead of bowing down and worshiping him, what did they do? They mocked him. They spat upon him. They

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

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made for him a crown of thorns and they said, “Crucify him, crucify him. We will not have this man to reign over us.”

Today is no different. People in the world are not watching. They are not straining their eyes for Jesus unless they have been saved by his grace. For, indeed, we are straining our eyes or we should be. Even when he returns again in power and great glory the Word of God teaches us that though the world will know precisely who he is, they will still blaspheme him and refuse to worship him for who he is. You see, the world hates our God, their God. Though most will deny it, they hate him.

So, again, this is not the world of our unveiling. The world sees no need to bow in humble repentant faith and cry out for undeserved mercy and forgiveness of sins to live for the glory of God. They see no need for that. So, “It has not appeared as yet what we shall be.”¹¹ Because, again, this world is not the place of our unveiling as the sons of God.

Ah, but one day, one day as we read, for example in 2 Peter chapter three verse 10, “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.”¹² And later in verse 13 he says, “But according to His promise we are [what?] we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”¹³

Again, my friend, I hope if you know Christ you are looking because if you are not looking, may I submit to you that you are in love with the world more than you should be. And, secondly, you do not understand the glories of heaven.

And this brings us back to our text in Revelation 21 where in these first eight verses we see that believers will one day experience five categories of heavenly bliss, a new heaven and a new earth, a new Jerusalem, a new intimacy that we studied last week. And now today, a new creation and a new satisfaction.

Notice in verse four where we learn of the new creation. “And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”¹⁴

The new creation of heaven is here set in contrast to our present fallen condition that is really characterized by these four ills that are mentioned here, four maladies that have plagued man since the fall: death, mourning, crying and pain. And here we see the tender compassion of God in the very first phrase.

¹¹ 1John 3:12.

¹² 2 Peter 3:10.

¹³ 2 Peter 3:13.

¹⁴ Revelation 21:4.

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We read, “He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.”¹⁵

The image is precious here, isn't it? It is like that of a father who would take a crying child and say, “Son, come here. Sit on daddy's lap. Why are you weeping?” And he takes out a Kleenex and he wipes away those tears and he brings comfort. David spoke of this compassion in Psalm 56 verse eight. There we read, “Thou hast taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Thy bottle; Are they not in Thy book?”¹⁶

It was a custom of the ancient Jews to have within their possession a very small vile that looks kind of like a test tube. I have seen them. They have recovered them in archaeological finds. I have a friend that has a whole collection of them. They are in various colors, but they look like a small test tube and they were a reminder of the tears of this particular passage of Scripture, reminding them that God is so intimately concerned about their tears that he would catch them in a bottle, figuratively speaking. And so this really symbolizes God's compassion to the point of noticing even the most minute details of our sorrow, the very tears that would come from our eyes and flow down our cheeks.

Dear friends, here we read in the new creation there will be no more tears. Why? Because the curse is lifted. It has been purged away. He also says there will be no more death. And, of course, death is always associated with mourning, crying and pain.

In Hebrews chapter two and verse 14 we read that both the devil who has power over death and in Revelation 20 verses 10 and 14 and death itself are going to be cast into the lake of fire. Because of Satan we see death, sin and death coming into the world. And in the new creation we will all be removed.

Think for a moment of the contrast here between the faith of Babylon that we studied in chapter 17, that city that will exist one day. Perhaps it exists today. We are not sure exactly which city it will be, but it will be like the capital city of Satan's kingdom upon the earth, ruled by the antichrist, a city that will one day symbolize the godless materialism and the blasphemous idolatry that man has always preferred over serving and worshipping the most high God.

This city is really set up in contrast between the new Jerusalem. You will recall in Revelation 17:1 we read, “Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot,”¹⁷ referring to that whole city, that whole enterprise of Babylon. But here in verse nine of chapter 21 we read, “Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”¹⁸ That is the new Jerusalem.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Psalm 56:8.

¹⁷ Revelation 17:1.

¹⁸ Revelation 21:9.

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Think of the contrast there between those two cities. My friends, Babylon will be a real place characterized by the absolute absence of God. Likewise the new Jerusalem will be a real place, but one that will be characterized by the ubiquitous presence of God. Unlike the new Jerusalem, we read that Babylon will be characterized in Revelation chapter 18 as a place of torment and mourning, death and dying, weeping and crying out. What a contrast to new Jerusalem where there will be no more death, mourning, crying or pain.

Now, the negative descriptions of our sin ravaged earth that the Lord uses here in verse four are really the only means by which God can communicate to us what heaven will be like in this new creation. He cannot describe to us things that we have no capacity to grasp. Therefore, what he has done is describe to us what will not be there. And then we begin to get the picture. Even at that, it is hard to conceive, isn't it? Living in a place where these four particular miseries no longer exist.

I know that some of you are struggling with some of these things right now. In fact we all are in various ways, but some more acutely than others. But what hope we have to know that one day we will experience an existence where none of these things are there. And may I also add? As you experience these things this side of glory, let them be a reminder to you—as they are supposed to be—of the hideous consequences of sin. And let them also be a reminder to us of the hope that is ours in Christ, the sheer bliss that we will enjoy in the new creation all because God's mercy upon us to live in a place where sin is banished forever.

As we meditate on the joy that awaits us, we should also bow in just a reverent sense of thanksgiving because here we see the fulfillment of Isaiah 53. You will recall in verse three we read:

He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.¹⁹

I spend much of my life trying to comfort people who are in mourning, who are filled with sorrow, filled with pain. The only comfort that I can give them is the greatest comfort of all and that is the comfort of the Holy Spirit through his Word. And certainly these promises of which we read here in chapter 21 are ones that I go to quite often, reminding people that those promises are theirs, if, indeed, they have placed their faith in Christ. And I find that sadly most Christians are so caught up in the things of the world and so comfortable with the pleasures of our western culture that they really think very little of heaven.

It has been a peculiar matter that I have noticed over the years in counseling. Very often I will ask people to pause and share with me what heaven will be like. And it is amazing

¹⁹ Isaiah 53:3-4.

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to watch them stumble and stagger over their words, not really aware of all that God has prepared for them in their future eternal home. Oh, but they can tell you all the shows that are on televisions on the weeknights. They can tell you who the latest American idol is or whatever. But they know little of heaven. There is something very wrong with that.

You know, things can change in an instant. And suddenly all the things of this world can seem absolutely ridiculous and meaningless.

This week I was in Illinois and we heard on the news that there was a father and a mother. They had three boys and two girls. The mother was driving with the two girls—one was 11 and one was eight. For some unknown reasons he steered into the path of an oncoming vehicle and the mother and the two girls were instantly killed. And the neighbors were talking about how the father was going around comforting them as he read from the Bible. Now what does that tell you? It tells you that there is a man who understands the glory of God and even in the midst of great sorrow he has set his mind on things above and, believe me, when that phone call came to him, the things of this world were meaningless to him. His longing for heaven was increased exponentially.

The magnificent truths of the gospel never cease to amaze me. It is good news beyond our ability to fathom. And here in verse four we are reminded of the experience that will be ours. Again, he says, “He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain.”²⁰ And then notice he says, “The first things have passed away.”²¹

In other words, the metastasizing corruption of sin, of the old creation are gone along with all of the cancerous consequences of sin that we all experience. And how can this possibly be? And I love this in verse five. “And he who sits on the throne said, ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty. Behold, I am making all things new.”

It is interesting. It is as though all of the sudden in the midst of this glorious vision God the Father speaks. And what is fascinating is this is the first time we have heard from him that we know of explicitly since chapter one and verse eight where he said, “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’”²² So in other words, he is saying, “You can rest assured that what I am promising here is going to take place.”

Then we read, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.”²³ In other words, “Carve these things in the granite of the Word of God, the Word of the living God. These things will happen.” While on earth Jesus promised in Luke 21 verse 33, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.”²⁴

²⁰ Revelation 21:4.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Revelation 1:8.

²³ Revelation 21:5.

²⁴ Luke 21:33.

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Indeed, with over 300 Bible prophecies being fulfilled precisely, literally in Jesus' first advent, we have absolutely no reason to believe that the rest of these promises will not likewise be fulfilled perfectly.

And then in verse six we read, “And He said to me, ‘It is done.’”²⁵ What is done? Well, the subject of the verb in the original language is the all things in verse five. And it is fascinating that is in the perfect tense which indicates that the action now stands accomplished. That is to say that all that God has promised regarding the uncreation of the old world and the creation of the new world, everything that he has revealed to us about the new Jerusalem, all the things that we will experience, all the things that will include even the faith of the unsaved, all of those things are already accomplished. They merely await the actual moment in history when they will be manifested. It is done.

Beloved, upon the cross of Calvary the Lord Jesus Christ said what? “It is finished.”²⁶ And so ended the work of redemption that was set into motion in eternity past. And now here before us the almighty who sits upon the throne of absolute sovereignty says, “It is done.”²⁷ And with these words so ends the history of redemption and the beginning of the eternal state.

And who is this almighty sovereign that makes such a statement? He says, “I am Alpha and Omega.”²⁸ Now, it is interesting again. This is the same statement that he made of himself in chapter one and verse eight, thus, confirming, I believe, that this is the Father speaking. But I might add that this is also an appellation of the Lord Jesus Christ in chapter 22 verse 13 which confirms for us what Jesus has told us, “I and the Father are one.”²⁹

That God is the alpha and the omega really underscores his omniscience as well as his sovereignty. You see, alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek language. And we know that letters can be mixed and can be matched in a myriad of ways to make words and express concepts in language. And even so God is the one who has created man to be able to understand him. We are created in his image. He has given us the capacity of language. And like the letters of the alphabet that can express an infinite array of concepts, so, too, our God is the infinite reservoir of all information. He is the omniscient God. He is the source of all that can be known. He is the source of all that can be revealed.

And so what we understand here is that there is nothing that exists outside the realm of his knowledge. Therefore, there is nothing that can possibly surprise him. There is nothing that could possibly baffle him. And so therefore there is nothing that can thwart his intended purposes to glorify himself.

²⁵ Revelation 21:6.

²⁶ John 19:30.

²⁷ Revelation 21:6.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ John 10:30.

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“I am Alpha and Omega.”³⁰ And he adds, “The beginning and the end.”³¹ In other words, he is the first cause. He is also the one with the final say. He is the creator as well as the consummator.

In Romans chapter 11 verse 36 the apostle Paul reminds us, “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”³²

Pretty well covers it, right? In Ephesians chapter four and verse six we read that there exists one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. And so when he says, “I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end,” he is really adding his signature here to these great promises. This is his signature expression, promising us that all these things will transpire, a new haven and a new earth, a new Jerusalem, a new intimacy, a new creation.

And, finally, a new satisfaction. At the end of verse six he says, “I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.”³³

Thirst is a powerful metaphor. It pictures a desperation for that which is required to give life, to maintain life. Without water we very quickly die. But here the picture is that of spiritual dehydration, an earnestness for that which gives spiritual life here pictured as water. And water in the Word of God always symbolizes eternal life, salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I might add that this is the second time the personal pronoun “I” is used in this verse which emphasizes to us that it is God alone who satisfies our thirst with that which he alone can provide from the spring of the water of life without cost.

As a footnote, what a radically different thirst quencher this is than the cup offered by the harlot Babylon who will make sinners—according to Revelation 17:2, “drunk with the wine of her immorality.”³⁴ I ask you. Have you ever found a drunk who was finally satisfied and had enough to drink? Have you ever found a person who was consumed with sexual immorality that finally gets to a place where they say, “You know, I think I have had all I need”? No. It goes on and on and on until they are destroyed. But not so here with the one who thirsts for eternal life that will satisfy.

Now who are those who thirst in verse six? Let me put it to you this way. It is the person who is absolutely sick of the consequences of their sin. It is the type of person who is broken over the weight of their guilt, a person who is so overwhelmed by his utter helplessness to change that he will be like the tax collector that we read about in Luke chapter 18. In verse 13 we read that he was standing some distance away from Jesus, but

³⁰ Revelation 21:6.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Romans 11:36.

³³ Revelation 21:6.

³⁴ Revelation 17:2.

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he was unwilling to even lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, crying out, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.”³⁵

It is such a precious thing to be around a person who is truly convicted of their sin, who is truly thirsting for genuine salvation. And what you will say or what you will hear them say, in essence, is something like this, “I am sick of my life. I am sick of being ruled by my emotions, by my lusts. I am sick of feeling the guilt that I have before a holy God. I am sick of the way my life is turning out. Relationships around me continue to fall apart. I have no joy in life. Frankly, I am sick of life.”

So this speaks of the man who is burdened over his sin, who is thirsty for forgiveness and a genuine relationship with the living God, to be reconciled to him and to really have life, a person who is so spiritually dehydrated that they will hunger and thirst for righteousness as Jesus said in Matthew five and verse six.

I was thinking as I meditated upon this text of some very wealthy people that I had a chance to share Christ with people that have tasted all of the pleasures of life, but they would admit that they were now more empty than ever. Recently one man even used that phrase. He said “Dave, I am almost 70 years old and nothing in life satisfies me anymore. I have been all over the world. I have tasted all of the pleasures of the world. I have tried several religions. But they only make things worse,” he said. And he said, “I am at a place where,” the way he put it, “if I can’t trust God, who can I trust?”

Well, of course, he had never heard the gospel. He had been to lots of churches and never heard the gospel. Can you imagine that? And as I shared with him the gospel of Christ, you could begin to see how his thirst could truly be satisfied. And by grace God saved him.

My friend, nothing can satisfy your thirst for genuine life, transforming life, certainly a thirst for eternal life in the presence of God, nothing except Jesus. It is for this reason that the Lord said in John seven verse 37, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.”³⁶ That man who lost his wife and daughters, that man understands the truth of satisfaction that comes through Christ.

Earlier this morning we read Isaiah’s invitation given to those who thirsted in the Old Testament for the free gift of salvation, eternal life that cannot be purchased on earth. There in verse one of chapter 55 we read, “Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost.”³⁷

You see, this is not something you can purchase, nor is it something you can in any way earn. And in verse seven he went on to add, “Let the wicked forsake his way, And the

³⁵ Luke 18:13.

³⁶ John 7:37.

³⁷ Isaiah 55:1.

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unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.”³⁸

My friend, if you have never come to the water of eternal life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will not only never be satisfied in this life, but you will be forever tormented for your rejection of the free gift that Christ gives you by his grace in salvation.

Once the Lord Jesus when he was here on earth met a very sinful woman, a woman who was drawing water from a well. The woman was terribly unsatisfied with her life and, of course, the omniscient gaze of the master could see all of this. And he said to her in John four verse 13, “Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”³⁹

Beloved, here in Revelation 21 we see the magnificent fulfillment of this, the well of eternal life that will spring up eternally for all of those who have thirsted for him, who have been satisfied by his grace. That is why we read here in verse six, “I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.”⁴⁰

I wish to add that the joys of eternal life really begin in this life. Now, certainly those joys are limited because we remain in this fallen world. We continue to struggle with our own sinfulness. But as believers we experience real joy. In fact, we are even commanded to rejoice always. We can experience abundant, exhilarating, exciting, fulfilling joy, a fulfilled life if we truly know Christ. And, again, I go back to the man who gives such a glowing testimony of that who was trying to comfort others as he grieves at the same time over the loss of his wife and two daughters.

But that joy can only be found when our thirst has been satisfied. And that thirst can only be satisfied through faith in Christ. And what is fascinating, the more we thirst for righteousness, the more we thirst to know God, the more he satisfies. But do you know what happens? The more we thirst the more we want of him. So at some level we are never fully satisfied until glory and that is when we will be fully satisfied.

How I long for that day. The psalmist longed for that day in Psalm 42 verse one. He said:

As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear
before God?⁴¹

He cries out because then and only then will that satisfaction be complete.

³⁸ Isaiah 55:7.

³⁹ John 4:13-14.

⁴⁰ Revelation 21:6.

⁴¹ Psalm 42:1-2.

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But if you are here without Christ you have no life. You certainly have no eternal life. In fact, I would submit to you that if you are here today without Christ, your life is nothing more than a series of escape as well as a constant pursuit of pleasure. And nothing satisfies.

Think about it. You escape from boredom through entertainment. Why do you think we have so many television stations, so many movies, so many malls? We have got to find a place for people to escape. Stadiums are filled with people who are not just trying to have fun, but on a fundamental level they are trying to escape the boredom of life.

You escape from emotional pain through drugs and alcohol. You escape relational pain as well as physical urges through sexual immorality. You escape physical pain as well through prescription drugs. Many times people will escape guilt by blame shifting, never taking responsibility. It is always somebody else's fault.

And so life is nothing more than constantly trying to escape from all that you experience. May I say to you? You really don't live. You just exist. You just merely exist. But you also exist and you know this to be true with the gnawing reality that you are not right with God, that God's wrath is abiding upon you. And unless you get right with him, unless you are reconciled to him through faith in Christ, unless you deal with your rebellion, you will someday spend an eternity in hell.

This is what God has promised, eternal separation from the one who wants to dwell with you. And what is fascinating to me is that not only in hell will your thirst be increased exponentially, but it will obviously never be satisfied, though you live in a lake. But it is a lake of fire.

What a contrast to the bliss of heaven that awaits those who thirsted for God in verse seven. "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."⁴² Now who are those who overcome? What is he talking about here? Are you an overcomer? To whom does this refer?

Well, again, it refers to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and have placed their faith in Christ. John answers this in 1 John five verse four. "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith."⁴³ And he goes on to say, "And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"⁴⁴

You see, my friends, this will be the man that shall inherit these things. And the concept of "will inherit" carries the general sense in the original language of taking possession of something, entering into possession of something or partaking of something. And what is the something? Again, it goes back to the all things of verse five. All of the things that Christ has promised. The overcomer will inherit God's blessings, all of the glories of

⁴² Revelation 21:7.

⁴³ 1 John 5:4.

⁴⁴ 1 John 5:5.

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heaven, the new Jerusalem, the new creation, all of these things that will explode upon the scene in the eternal state.

In Matthew five verse five Jesus said, “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.”⁴⁵ And in Mathew 19 verse 29 he said, “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit [what?] eternal life.”⁴⁶ And in Matthew chapter 25 verse 34 Jesus promised that we will, “inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”⁴⁷

And I love the apostle Paul’s prayer for the Colossian believers and ultimately for all of us that they would, according to Colossians 1:12:

[Give] thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.⁴⁸

You see, this is the inheritance of which Peter spoke of in 1 Peter 1:4. “An inheritance,” he says, “which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”⁴⁹ You see, again, this has been God’s plan from the beginning.

But notice what else is added to the promise that he gives us. Not only will we inherit these things, but there is something more. He says, “And I will be his God and he will be My son.”⁵⁰ Oh, what an inconceivably glorious promise, to be chosen as an adopted son of God.

In Romans eight Paul comments on the sheer bliss of our inheritance in the glories of heaven. And he says in verse 18, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”⁵¹ And then in verse 23 he says that we are “waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.”⁵²

Oh, beloved, there is the hope that we have in Christ. This, my friends, will be the final and ultimate satisfaction for those who thirst for God who made us in his image to the praise of his glory.

⁴⁵ Matthew 5:5.

⁴⁶ Matthew 19:29.

⁴⁷ Matthew 25:34.

⁴⁸ Colossians 1:12-14.

⁴⁹ 1 Peter 1:4.

⁵⁰ Revelation 21:7.

⁵¹ Romans 8:18.

⁵² Romans 8:23.

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But notice the contrast of those who will not overcome by their faith in Christ, verse eight. “But for the cowardly...”⁵³

Let me explain that. The cowardly here is a reference to those who pretend to have a faith in Christ that is not a genuine faith. They cower in the face of persecution. As we read in Hebrews 10:39, these are the ones who shrink back to destruction.

So he says for those people, “For the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable,”⁵⁴ referring to those detestable polluters who practice pure evil, “and murderers,” he says, “and immoral persons and sorcerers.”⁵⁵

Sorcerers is interesting. In the original language it is **PHARMAKOS** (far-mak-os’). We get our word “pharmacy” from that. And it is a reference to the ones who in those days and even to this day use drugs, mind altering drugs in the context of their idolatry especially for occult practitioners. And we know that certainly there will be a great sorcery and drug abuse that will occur during the future delusion of the antichrist. So for those people a well as “idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”⁵⁶

This is reminiscent of Paul’s description of those who will never enter into the glories of heaven. 1 Corinthians six verse nine.

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate...”⁵⁷ Which, by the way would include in the original language the concept of not only just effeminate males, but also transsexuals and transvestites. “...nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.”⁵⁸

How unspeakably tragic to think of these people who pursue all of these things to escape life. They never live it. They certainly have no eternal life pursuing the fleeting and unsatisfying pleasures of this world, forfeiting an inheritance to the kingdom of God.

Dear sinner, if this is you, I plead with you to repent. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He will save you from your sins. And I would encourage you to do so before it is too late.

For those of us who know and love Christ, in closing may I just challenge all of us who have overcome the penalty of sin through faith in Christ to make it our practice in private

⁵³ Revelation 21:8.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ 1 Corinthians 6:9.

⁵⁸ 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

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as well as in public to celebrate Immanuel in the new creation, God with us, the title of this discourse?

Rejoice with exceeding joy knowing that one day we will live forever in the presence of our glorious and holy God.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for the joys that are ours undeservedly so. We praise you for your love for us and we cry out to you to be merciful to those who are lost who are trying to escape from life. Lord, convict them of their sin. And I pray that today would be the day that they will repent, that they will cry out for forgiveness and that today will be the day that they will experience the miracle of the new birth and join with us in the glorious hope of the new creation. I ask all of this in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

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