

The 5th Sunday after Epiphany ~ Sunday, February 4, 2024

“Heaven: Life in Heaven”

Revelation 7:9-17

INTRODUCTION

We live lives of such relative _____ in our North American context, that we rarely think about heaven, and when we do, it really doesn't seem all that attractive a prospect. We prefer the _____ of our material prosperity here rather than the hard to picture raptures of our heavenly home hereafter.

It'll awaken in us a proper _____ for the life to come. It'll form in us a renewed resolve to prepare for that life even while we live in this one. And it'll weaken our _____ to the fleeting pleasures of this life as we begin to see how much sweeter are the “solid joys and lasting treasures none but Zion's children know” in the life that lies ahead of us,

_____ is the biblical antidote to worldliness.

#1. Heaven will be a life of _____.

“One of the elders addressed me, saying, ‘Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?’” (Revelation 7:13)

The “great tribulation” is often interpreted as being a special period of intense _____ just before the final return of Christ.

“I John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and kingdom and patient endurance that are in Christ Jesus.” (Revelation 1:9)

Those three things—tribulation, kingdom, and patient endurance—always go _____ for those who are in Christ.

The great tribulation, in other words, is a reference to the whole period between the _____ and _____ coming of Jesus, viewed from the vantage point of the suffering Church.

When John sees this vast multitude, he's talking about the whole _____—the whole company of the Lord's redeemed who've been faithful, endured, and come out of the sufferings and tribulations with which this age is _____.

“These are they coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the _____.” (Revelation 7:14)

Although blood stains and ruins clothes, the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world can make even the foulest _____.

This is the _____ of every citizen of heaven. They're robed in the _____ of Christ, and are clean, pure, and holy. Their white robes are the symbol not merely of a legal righteousness, satisfying divine justice, but of a pervasive, _____ holiness. They're pure all the way through.

Of course, if we believe in Jesus, this is already _____ true of us here and now. Right now in the sight of God, before the bar of heaven's justice, we're clean and righteous. Not because of anything we've done, but because we're robed with the _____ of Christ.

Yet, while we live in this world, there still remains so much of our old _____ in us. We may be legally, forensically righteous, _____ in Jesus Christ before the judgment of God right now, but we're not yet made perfect intrinsically, _____, like those described in Revelation 7.

We can be stubborn. We're _____ to our sin. We stumble and we fall. And our sin in this life is like heavy, iron shackles or chains constraining our wrists and our ankles.

Our sanctification—our progress in holiness—is _____ and _____ in this life.

However, the moment we die, the last _____ of sin will finally and fully fall away, and we'll be _____ of its pollution, power, and presence.

#2. Heaven will be a life of _____.

“Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.” (Revelation 14:1-3)

So, 12x12x1,000 is a symbol for the _____. If you're a believer in Jesus, you're included in John's vision here; your face is in that great _____.

They're singing _____ to God. The volume, John says, is so deafening, it's like a storm pounding the shore during a hurricane.

It's not ominous, threatening, ugly, or jarring. It sounds, John says, like a _____ voice.

Romans 15:5-6, Paul prays that the Romans might live in such _____ with one another "that they will together, with one _____," literally one mouth, "glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul wants there to be such profound _____ expressed, particularly in their worship, that they'll sing as though it were with a single mouth. John gives us a picture of that prayer perfectly _____.

There's no cacophony, only _____ in heaven.

At the same time, he says it sounds like many harps all being played at once, which suggests that the sound is lovely, complex, _____, and beautiful.

Notice John says in verse 3 that they're singing "a _____ song."

"Sing to Him a new song, play skillfully and shout for joy." (Psalm 33:3)

"He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God." (Psalm 40:3)

"Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things!" (Psalm 98:1)

"Sing to the Lord a new song, His praise from the ends of the earth!" (Isaiah 42:10)

This call to sing a new song isn't a command to write new _____, but the song of newness we'll sing; the song that springs with gladness from the heart of everyone made _____.

Only the _____ can sing that song because only they have the capacity, the right, and the title to sing it.

"Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth." (Revelation 5:9-10)

Notice they sing in _____ of the Lord Jesus Christ. He opens the scroll of God's sovereign purposes. He brings the plan of God to pass. And the right to do so rests upon His atoning _____ for sinners.

We'll be _____, we'll rejoice, we'll worship and sing praises because we'll

see _____—we'll see His glorified wounds, the marks of His cross, and of His great _____ for us.

When we see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus, when we see His majesty radiating from His wounds, we won't be able to _____ ourselves. Faced with this reality, we'll never _____ of adoring the triune God and pouring out our love for the Lamb who has so loved us.

#3. Heaven will be a life of _____.
Rest from _____. Rest from _____. Rest from _____.

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Blessed indeed,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labours, for their deeds follow them!'" (Revelation 14:3)

We can rest in heaven because _____ will be over. Combat with remaining _____, wrestling our thoughts from their wicked direction back to something that's pleasing to God will be over! Sorrow, suffering, and sickness will be over. Opposition and _____ from outside will be over.

This is what Paul had in mind when he says in 2 Corinthians 5:8 that he wants to be "at _____ with the Lord."

We're most _____ at home.

"He will dwell with us and be our God and we will be His people. He will wipe away every tear from our eyes and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things will have passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4)

This is a picture of true, final, _____ rest.

CONCLUSION

**How should we live now while we wait for it to come?
How do we prepare here, for life hereafter.**

Those who are made perfectly righteous in heaven are the ones who have laboured hard for _____ on earth. Those who rejoice in heaven have worked to _____ the flames of adoration and praise on earth. And those who rest in heaven are those who are resting by _____ upon the finished work of Jesus on earth.

"What is there of the life of the saints in heaven that can be seen in your Christian life today?"