

A New Heaven and a New Earth

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Sean, one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge Church, and it is my great honor and privilege to preach God's Word to you this morning. We are in the book of Revelation. We have been going through it for almost a year.

And if you don't have a Bible, please raise your hand, and we'd love to bring a copy over to you that you can use. We're in Revelation chapter 21, which is the second to last chapter of the book. Let me now pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word. Father, we confess that as we live in this world, it's so easy to lose sight of eternity and to think that all that we see is all that there is. But Lord, we ask that today, by your Word, by your Spirit, that you would radically transform our perspective.

That you would renew our minds to think about the renewal of all creation that is coming. So that we might look forward to that day and persevere toward that day with great hope, with faith, with expectancy.

[1 : 24] Lord, breathe fresh hope into people who are suffering and downtrodden this morning.

Lift up their heads. Build up your church for the glory of your name. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Please stand, if you're able, for the reading of God's Word from Revelation 21, 1 to 8.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them, and they will be his people. And God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more.

[2 : 48] Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore. For the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, Behold, I am making all things new.

Also he said, Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true. And he said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life, without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage. And I will be his God, and he will be my son.

But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable. As for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars. Their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur.

Which is the second death. This is God's holy and authoritative word. You may be seated. In Western music theory, there's what we call chord resolution.

[4 : 03] And notes that are called dissonant, which is unstable or incomplete. It sounds like something is missing when we listen to it. And notes that are, you know, consonant, that sounds complete.

So if you have a C scale, this piano is very out of tune, but bear with me. So that's a dissonant note, the seventh interval.

It sounds like something is not done. And it waits for resolution, and that's the consonant note. The eighth note, the root note. So... You guys hear that?

You long for that resolution? And so, sorry, thank you for the performance. There's... This passage serves to remind us that everything we see and the world that we live in right now are in that discordant note.

That dissonant note. It's like something feels wrong. It's not the way it's supposed to be. Something's incomplete. Longing for fulfillment.

[5 : 11] Longing for completion. And that creates a sense of drama, expectancy, suspense, until we finally reach that resolution.

And that resolution is what we see here in Revelation 21. Just to give an example of that tension that we're living in now, this year, earlier this year, heavy monsoons in East Africa caused flooding that killed 473 people and displaced 14,000, 410,000 people.

In May, a major landslide buried over 2,000 people alive. The 7.8 magnitude earthquake last year in Turkey and Syria killed 62,013 people.

As it says in Romans 8.22, the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth. That's what we live in. Creation itself is groaning in the pains of childbirth, in the buildup, the tension, and the drama and suspense of that dissonant reality.

[6 : 17] And not only the creation, but we ourselves, it says in Romans 8.23, we ourselves groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

We can see this in ourselves, in our bodies. Our bodies themselves are discordant. It's all out of sorts. In our church alone, we have had people deal with or are dealing with leukemia, diabetes, autoimmune disease, where our own body's immune system attacks itself, like ITP, ulcerative colitis, arthritis, lupus, lupus, and various other debilitating conditions, like Turner syndrome, Dandy-Walker syndrome, congenital heart defects, vasculitis, chronic back pain, chronic fatigue syndrome, among other things.

And not only our physical bodies, but also our sinful flesh, militate against the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The sinful world seduces us, ridicules us, and persecutes us.

The devil tempts us and lies to us and accuses us night and day. And so we, along with all creation, groan. How long?

We wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. If we don't keep this important reality in mind, if we don't remember the fact that we are in that dissonant reality, we can easily be wracked by doubts, be disillusioned, discouraged, and despair.

[8 : 00] But if we wait with faith and hope for the consummation of all things, a new heaven and a new earth that is surely coming, then we can persevere. And so the main point of our passage is this, look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, so that we might overcome the world with courage and faith.

And we're going to look at that in two parts. First, we'll see the reunion. Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. And secondly, we'll see the renewal. Behold, I am making all things new.

It says in verses 1 to 2, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

I'll talk about verse 1 a little more later in the second half of my sermon, so for now let's focus on verse 2. When the new heaven and the new earth comes, the people of God will descend upon it, out of heaven from God, as the holy city, New Jerusalem, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

The saints of God, that's us, are described in two main metaphors here. One is of a city, and the other is of a bride. This fulfillment of the New Jerusalem was prophesied in Isaiah 52.1, when all the saints who conquer and overcome the world by their faithful endurance, and by bearing witness to Jesus, and holding on to the gospel of Jesus Christ, will become the city of God, the new Jerusalem.

[9 : 38] And what's the point of that metaphor? Jesus tells us in verse 3. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them, and they will be his people. And God himself will be with them as their God. Twice in one verse, Jesus declares that God will now dwell with his people.

And that's the point of the metaphor. Why are we the city? Because God's gonna live there. He's gonna dwell with us. This is the final fulfillment of the oldest drama in all of history and all of scripture.

Because in the original creation, God dwelled with man. He walked in the garden alongside Adam and Eve, it said in Genesis 3. But because they sinned against God and ate the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they're banished from the garden of Eden.

Expelled, no longer able to eat of the tree of life. And the question that hovers over all of history and all of the Bible is will God ever dwell with his people again?

[10 : 54] Will we ever be fully restored to his presence again? After the exodus, God partially answers that question in the construction of the tabernacle. The word tabernacle, the Greek word behind the word dwelling place here in Revelation 21.3 is literally tabernacle.

It was there that God promised to his people, the Israelites in Exodus 29.45-46. I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God.

And they shall know that I am the Lord their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. That's why God rescued people from Egypt, that he might dwell among them. But even while Moses was receiving instructions on the mountain for the construction of the tabernacle, God's people couldn't wait and they sinned, they rebelled, they created a golden calf and worshipped it as an idol.

Like a newlywed bride committing adultery on the night of her wedding against her husband. Then God promised, but God was still faithful to his people, and then God promised the land of Canaan in Deuteronomy 12.9-10 and promised them he will make his name dwell there.

Maybe we'll get it this time. Solomon builds a temple for it to be God's dwelling place. But again, they whore after idols. They leave their God, their first love, so that the temple gets razed and Jerusalem is ransacked and they are exiled to Babylon and to Assyria.

[12 : 29] But God is still faithful. He keeps his promise again. He sends his son, Jesus Christ, to dwell with his people.

That's why in John 2.9-21, Jesus says that his own body is the temple of the holy temple of God. And that's because, as Colossians 2.9 says, in Jesus, the whole fullness of deity, all that is divine, dwell in him bodily.

Jesus is God dwelling with us. He is the temple of God. That's why John 1.14 says that Jesus, the eternal word of God, the word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Again, that same word. The word dwelt is literally to pitch a tent or to make a tabernacle, to tabernacle among us. But we killed him.

People were unfaithful to him. And he was resurrected, he ascends to the heaven, and he sends the Holy Spirit so that the Holy Spirit, the very presence, the Spirit of God can indwell his people that we might be the temple of God.

[13 : 43] That's what it says in 1 Corinthians 3.16. We are God's temple where God dwells. But even now, our fellowship God is disrupted.

It is partial. It is imperfect because we are sinful. Our objective union with God is unbreakable. But our communion with God, which is our ongoing experience of that union with God, is disrupted daily because we sin.

As we confess in the confession of sin, as we saw in the call to worship today, we partner with lawlessness, though temple of God we are.

We fellowship with darkness, though temple of God we are. We are unequally yoked with those who are rebelling against God, though the temple of God we are. Just how many times can we mess this up, ruin it all, can we really ever be restored to God's presence?

Will God really ever dwell with us again? And the resounding answer of Revelation 21 is, yes, he will. He will.

[14 : 57] Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and there will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

We are called the holy city, the new Jerusalem, to convey this idea of God's intimate, indwelling presence. Similarly, the metaphor of the bride, that we are a bride adorned for the bridegroom, is a fulfillment of the prophecies in Isaiah 61.10 and 62.5, and it communicates the same idea of fellowship and presence and intimacy.

It's a common temptation among engaged couples nowadays to spend more time stressing out about the wedding day than actually preparing for their married life.

Weddings are fun. Yes, they are fun. But it's after the wedding that the love life of a couple truly begins. It's after the wedding that the husband and wife consummate their marriage physically in the ecstasy of sexual intercourse.

It's after the wedding that the husband and wife move in together and make a home together. It's after the wedding that the husband and wife have children together, bear children and rear children together.

[16:17] All the best stuff happens after the wedding. Finally, on the wedding day, the bride's veil is lifted and the bride and the groom enjoy an intimacy and fellowship that they will share with no one else in the whole entire world.

That's the point of verse two. On that day, we, the church of Christ, the people of God, will be prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And as we'll see next week, the people of God are going to be ravishing in their beauty as the bride of Christ.

And we're going to be married to Jesus, the Lamb of God, forever and dwell with Him always in marital bliss. That's why it says in verse four, he will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

And death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. And don't miss the intimacy of this promise.

It doesn't merely say that, oh, we're not going to have anything anymore to cry about. Look at what it says. It says, He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

[17:47] The Lord God Himself will personally wipe away our tears. He will be the reason for our eternal happiness. He will be the reason why all our sorrow and crying ends.

In this life, in this fallen world, there are many things to cry about. But all of the problems and the pains of this world are but symptoms and ramifications of our central underlying brokenness.

And that is sin. And our consequence separation from God. It's because the world and humanity have been split asunder from God who is light, in whom is no darkness at all, that darkness has invaded our world.

It's because we have been split asunder from God who is love, it says in 1 John 4, 8, that hatred has pervaded our world. It's because we have been split asunder from God who is the giver of life, who has life in Himself, that disease and death have infiltrated our world.

The root of all our personal and societal and global ills is sin that separates us from God. But on that day, there will be no more sin, no more death, no more separation between us and God and we will be joined to our bridegroom forever.

[19:14] You guys long for that. Most of you probably don't know this, but my wife, Hannah's grandfather, is originally from North Korea. He was, this is a funny story, this is really sad too, he was literally in a bathhouse, a public bathhouse, taking a bath, when he, when North Korean's army came in, soldiers came into the bathhouse and took him forcibly and impressed him into service to serve in the North Korean army during the Korean War.

And after, after a whole bunch of fighting, the armistice agreement was finally signed in 1953 and North and South Korea were officially split in two, formally divided along the 38th parallel north, the latitude 38 degrees north of the equator.

And Hannah's grandfather, after the war, ended up on the South Korean side, which meant he would never see his wife in North Korea again. Though he didn't personally get to participate in this program, to help people like him, in 2018, the then South Korean president and North Korean dictator agreed to arrange a reunion of family members that are split between North and South. And these relatives hadn't seen each other for 60 years. And with the help of some old photographs, they identified one another and met. And there's a video you guys can watch, you can find one 92-year-old woman saw her son.

92-year-old woman saw her son for the first time since the end of the war. She said that she lost track of her son during the war while they were fleeing together when he was only four years old and she didn't know whether he was still alive or not.

[20:51] And she said she spent every single day of the following year just weeping as she looked across the river. And then in that video, when she sees him, she throws her arms around him and weeps uncontrollably.

Sin, like the war and like the 38th parallel, separates us from God. And all of our pain, all of our tears is because of that separation.

But on that glorious day, we're gonna be reunited with our bridegroom, we're gonna be united with our heavenly father forever. And on that day, we're not gonna see anymore as in a mirror dimly.

We're gonna see face to face. We're no longer gonna just know him partly, imperfectly.

We're gonna know him fully. And he will wipe away all of our tears. Brothers and sisters in Christ, what have you been crying about this week or this past year?

[22:11] Have you been crying because of pain and sickness that you or your loved ones are dealing with? Cancer, congenital heart defects, chronic fatigue syndrome, migraines.

There will be a day when all those things will be no more and God will wipe every tear from your eyes. On that day, my mother, who's been crippled with arthritis and my wife, who is always tired and lacking energy because of her vasculitis, they're going to, on that day, leap like a deer. Have you been crying because of a death of a loved one? Your mother, your baby, your brother, your friend.

On that day, our last enemy, death, will be defeated and we will exalt in triumph and say, oh, death, where is your sting? Oh, death, where is your victory?

Oh, death, where is your sting? It's swallowed up in victory. Have you been crying because of loneliness, anxiety, depression, despair?

[23 : 38] Have you been crying in sleepless nights, listless days? In a new heaven and a new earth, you will have perfect communion with God.

Loneliness will be banished forever. You will have perfect rest, perfect security, perfect peace. All that you have ever worried about will be gone, no more. Or have you been crying because of your sins?

This is what I cry about the most because I'm relatively healthy, still young. I want to be compassionate.

I want to be slow to anger like my heavenly father. But my tongue, my tongue, like it says in James 3, is a fire, a world of unrighteousness, a restless evil full of deadly poison.

[24 : 41] I want to be gentle and lowly in heart like my savior and Lord Jesus Christ, but instead I'm sometimes harsh and haughty.

I mourn and long for that that when my sins will be no more. Saints of God, what have you been crying about?

A day is surely coming when he will wipe away every tear from your eyes and death shall be no more and neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away.

Passed away. That's a wonderful word, isn't it? It brackets this section, this first section along with verse 1 which also uses that same word. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. and then here, for the former things have passed away. The word former is literally first in Greek. First things have passed away.

[25 : 48] So it matches the first heaven and first earth that passed away. All the things that were first will pass away apart from God including our first death.

Yes, we will die unless the Lord returns beforehand but that first death will pass away and will be raised to new life. On that day tears and pains will be things of the past. It will be in the rear view mirror and will say oh yeah those things that have passed away.

And that word first forms a nice contrast with a word that is repeated four times in our passage. New a new heaven a new earth new Jerusalem and finally in verse 5 behold I am making all things new. This world is decaying and disintegrating but it will be made new. This mortal perishable and dishonorable body will be made new immortal and imperishable and glorious.

It will not be a refurbished earth. It will be new. And that brings me to my second point renewal. In verse 3 Jesus exclaimed behold the dwelling place of God is with man.

[27 : 07] Now in verse 4 he who was seated on the throne I think this is God the father himself because he uses the first person pronouns instead of third person pronouns like Jesus does in verse 3 God the father himself exclaimed behold I am making all things new.

Those words echo the prophecy of Isaiah 43 19 and all things new of course includes a new heaven and a new earth mentioned in verse 1 God makes all things new both in a temporal sense and a qualitative sense it's going to be new in a temporal sense because it comes after the first earth and the first heaven but it will also be new in a qualitative sense of new renewal not something that's old and worn out no matter how much you dress up and clean up all things that you have they look old but this new heaven and new earth will not be like that it will be new with the death and resurrection ascension of Christ and the subsequent descent of the Holy Spirit among his people the renewal of creation has actually already begun and it begins with us that's why it says in 2nd Corinthians 5 17 therefore if anyone know a new creation the old has passed away the new behold a new has come but though this new creation was inaugurated by Christ it has begun with Christ it has not yet been consummated it has not yet had its full effect but in the new heaven and earth it will be finished this is such a guaranteed and certain outcome that

God says write this down in verse 5 for these words are trustworthy and true when something is reliable and true we often use this expression hey you can take that to the bank meaning that's that's you can bank on that that that check is not going to bounce but even banks fail in times of financial turmoil and stock certificates become worthless pieces of paper and hard worn cash depreciate in it never fails and it endures for all eternity so will all creation really be made new yes it will it will be made new all things new is not just a foolish fancy or a dream or a slogan it is written unchangeably and inherently and infallibly in the word of

God it will happen it's trustworthy and true so much so that God says in verse six it is done because when God speaks something it is as good as done and a peculiar feature of this new heaven and earth is that the sea was no more it says in verse one in order to understand what that means we need to survey the use of this word sea in this book first the sea as I've mentioned throughout this sermon series is a frequent symbol of cosmic chaos in scripture because the sea was one of the things that ancient people and people to this day fear the most because of the crashing waves and the howling winds you can't predict the sea you can't control the sea you can't measure the length of the sea and you can't plumb the depth of the sea according to the national oceanic and atmospheric administration 95% of the world's ocean remains unexplored to this day 95% a 2022 study by the fish safety foundation commissioned by the

Pew charitable trust suggests that more than 100,000 fishermen die while fishing that's almost 300 fishermen per day that's annually 100,000 fishermen that's the highest fatality rate among all professions far higher than the fatality rates among firefighters and police officers it's the most dangerous profession in the world it's fitting for that reason that in the old testament the sea is represented as the abode of the ancient serpent leviathan the sea dragon which is a symbol of satan this is why in revelation 12 17 and 13 1 both the dragon and the beast are described as emerging out of the sea so that's the first use of the word sea and the second use of the word sea we see in revelation is in revelation 20 verse 13 the sea there is a realm of the dead associated with death and Hades so then what does it mean that the the final destruction of this sea in the new creation fits the pattern of

[32 : 44] God's creative work and redemptive work throughout all of history in Genesis 1 9 to 10 at the creation of the world God gathered into one place the waters under the heavens to let the dry land appear as a habitation fit for humanity and then he called the dry land earth and the waters that were gathered together called seas similarly after the flood judgment during Noah's day kind of uncreated or decreed the world God in a sense recreated the world by making the waters recede from the earth continually until the waters it says were dried off from the earth and the ground was dry so that Noah and his family can inhabit the earth once more and continue the line of humanity and Isaiah 51 10 to 11 describes God's deliverance of his people at the exodus using this same language of God creating a habitation for his people by drying the waters he says in

Isaiah 51 10 to 11 was it not you who dried up the sea the waters of the great deep who made the depths of the sea away for the redeemed to pass over and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing everlasting joy shall be upon their heads they shall obtain gladness and joy and sorrow and sighing shall flee away again and again throughout the scriptures God is seen drying up the seas that's how he rescues his people in order to create a place where he can dwell with his people so likewise in this ultimate new creation this is the final time the consummation of all things the sea will be no more in this way God will make the last things as the first just as God spoke the first creation into being he will surely bring about the new creation and all that separates us from God all that dampens our communion with

God all that drowns out the worship of heaven around us will be no more and God declares climactically in verse 6 it is done it is done this echoes the words of Revelation 15 1 and 16 17 where after all of God's judgments are finished he says it is done it is finished it's the same words because these two things the judgment of God over the world and the new creation are flip sides of the same coin the new heaven and new earth cannot come until the first heaven and the first earth are passed away and so let me ask you if you're here what words will be proclaimed over you at the end of the world will it be the wrath of

God is hereby finished it is done you be objects of God's wrath or will it be new heaven and a new earth it is done that depends on your answer to the question who do you believe Jesus to be what do you believe that Jesus has done for you do you believe that Jesus is a son of God who became a son of man lived a perfect life of obedience to his father and died on the cross not for his own sins

but for the sins of his people to pay the penalty for our sins and absorb the wrath of God in himself so that he might redeem us to for himself for God do you believe that Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day and has ascended to the heavens at the right hand of the father and he is right now reigning there and making intercession for us if you believe that if you know Jesus and follow him as your Lord then what Jesus said on the cross as he was breathing his last breath in John 19 30 applies to you it is finished it is done wrath of God is finished for you after declaring it is done God continues in verse six I am the alpha and the omega the beginning and the end to the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment many of you already know that alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet and that omega is the last letter in the Greek alphabet so it's like Jesus is saying I am the A to the Z it means that God is the beginning and the end this is the second time in the book of Revelation when God the Father's direct speech is quoted the first time was at the beginning of the book in Revelation 1-8 when he said [38 : 00] I am the alpha and the omega who is and who was and is to come the almighty so the placement of these verses at the beginning and end of the book of Revelation is no coincidence it reinforces the very point that this verse is making that God presides sovereignly over all of human history and of all that is written in the book of Revelation from the beginning to the end what do you see at the very beginning of the Bible in Genesis 1-1 in the beginning God God God is there at the beginning not humans not Leviathan the dragon God is at the beginning and what will be at the end God because he is the alpha and the omega this captures the absolute sovereignty of God over all of human history man is not the master of his own fate not the captain of his own soul

God is when we read a good novel we go on a thrilling ride and we are surprised and there are setbacks because we don't know what's going on and we don't know what will happen but the author of the book does not wring his hands with concern or anxiety as he reads through his own book because he knows what's going to happen in the end he wrote it God is the author of all creation and all of human history because he is the alpha and the omega the beginning and the end at the peak of our lives is God at the rock bottom of our lives is God at our birth is God at our death there is God in eternity past there is God in eternity future there is God he is the uncreated one the eternal one the ancient of days have you reckoned with this God it is the first business of human being which is a creature of God to reckon with its creator have you done that you cannot hide from God you cannot run from God you are accountable to God even after all that humanity has done throughout history to run away from God and to rebel against God at the end of history it will still be God so don't worry if you don't know where your life is headed right now don't worry if you don't know how long you will live if you don't know what's going to happen to your child if you don't know what's going to happen to your career

God is there from the beginning to the end so don't worry when your life as a Christian is hard when your life is full of sorrow and suffering and you wonder is this worth it when you're caricatured by the world and persecuted for your faith remember that it's our God and not our detractors and persecutors who is the alpha and the omega the last person standing will be God I know you all believe this in your heads if you're a Christian you believe this but do you really believe this in your heart do you really know the sovereignty of God in your bones does it actually function in your life when things are not going your way because if it did when we are weak need and faltering this doctrine will brace us up and give us peace and listen to this wonderful promise from the alpha and omega in verse 6 to the thirsty

I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment this echoes the promise of Isaiah 55 1-2 come everyone who thirsts come to the waters and he who has no money come buy and eat buy wine and milk without money and without price this is the water of life that we see in Revelation 22 17 it's the river of the water of life that flows brightest crystal from the throne of God where the father and the son the lamb are seated it's the Holy Spirit John 7 37 39 tells us exactly what this living water is Jesus cried out if anyone thirsts if anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink whoever believes in me as the scripture has said out of his heart will flow rivers of living water now this he said about the spirit whom those who believed in him were to receive for as yet the spirit had not been given because Jesus was not yet glorified it is the spirit who gives life Acts 2 38 promises all people repent repent of your sins and be baptized which is an outward profession of our inward faith in Jesus Christ repent repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit our Lord Jesus Christ decisively crushed the head of the serpent on the cross and then because of

that because he did that as a risen and ascended Lord he was able to send the Holy Spirit down to us and the Holy Spirit who indwells us and flows in us like rivers of living water is like the antivenom that courses through our figurative veins to undo and to expel and to destroy every single bit of the lie of the serpent and the Satan and all of every single one of its ill effects and that spirit of life will eventually overflow and envelop and all of us and until we have resurrection bodies forever in the new heaven and the new earth it's a staggering promise and how do you how do you receive that the only condition is this that you are thirsty to the thirsty

[44 : 33] I will give from the spring of water the water of life without payment you don't need money you just need to be thirsty what does that mean you need to be humble enough to recognize your own sinfulness your own spiritual deprivation and neediness and come to the source of this living water there's a rare disorder called adipsia where people don't feel thirst even when they are dehydrated so they have to be instructed and commanded to take water or else they die this condition which is really rare in the physical world is unfortunately very common in the spiritual world the self-righteous and the self-sufficient never enter the kingdom of God never they will not partake in the new heaven and the new earth but if you know that you have no money if you know that you can't buy this living water with whatever you've ever done that all your good works are insufficient that your sins are many if you're a needy sinner who recognizes his or her own need for forgiveness if you are poor in spirit if you hunger and thirst for righteousness then Jesus says you will be satisfied and there's only one source of this water of life and that's Jesus to what or to whom are you turning to satisfy your soul thirst your eternal longing that can only be satisfied by God money sex fame people's approval or acclaim a successful career do you think that getting married or having a child will satisfy you do you think getting into your dream school will satisfy you do you think early retirement and permanent vacation will satisfy you if you turn to these things or to any other thing that is not

Jesus Christ to satisfy your soul thirst your spiritual longing if you make them if you make any other thing the ultimate object of your desire and affection and love the more you drink the more thirsty you will get the more dehydrated you will get it will be like drinking salty seawater our body can't process so much salt so in order to get rid of the salt in the body you pee and you pee way more than you can take in so if you keep drinking salt water you die because it will never satisfy your thirst that's what it's like to turn to idols things that are not Jesus Christ to satisfy you if anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink says Jesus whoever believes in me shall never thirst will you humble yourself before

God this morning will you acknowledge your thirst and cling to Jesus alone as the fountain of living water verse 7 continues the promise the one who conquers will have this heritage and I will be his God and he will be my son the word conquer is a key word throughout the book of Revelation every single one of Jesus' letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 end with this promise to those who conquer to the one who conquers here's a sample from Revelation 2 10 to 11 do not fear what you are about to suffer you will have tribulation be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life the one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death similarly in Revelation 3 21 Jesus says the one who conquers I will grant him to sit with me on my throne as I also conquered and sat down with my father on his throne and this gives us a clue as to what this means that we are to conquer

Jesus conquered it says in Revelation 5 5 to 6 not by triumphing militarily and defeating all his earthly enemies but by being slain on the cross as the lamb of God so then we follow in Jesus' footsteps we conquer as Christians by being faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ even unto death by holding on to the testimony of Jesus that's how we are saved so no we are not being saved here by our own good works or what we do because ultimately what saves us is the testimony of Jesus the gospel of Jesus Christ that's why it's spring of water water of life without payment remember what he said in Revelation 12 11 we are singing about this this morning they have conquered him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony for they love not their lives even unto death the means by which we conquer is yes of course our testimony but it's the testimony of the fact of the blood of the slain lamb of God it's the same paradox we see elsewhere in scripture Philippians 2 12-13 work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you to both to will and to work for his good pleasure we can work out our own salvation only because it is God who's doing it or 1 Corinthians 15-10 but by the grace of God I am what I am and his grace toward me was not in vain on the contrary I worked harder than any of them though not I

but the grace of God that is with me we work harder than anyone else how?

[51 : 01] because it's the grace of God that's working in us the grace of God in the bloodshed of Jesus Christ on the cross is what gives life it's what energizes us it's what enables us to persevere in faith and obedience so yes we have a role to play but the decisive role belongs to God it's the grace of God that justifies and it's also the grace of God that sanctifies the grace of God simultaneously enables us to persevere and it itself preserves us to eternal life so yes we must endure we must be conquerors we must be overcomers not succumers but we do that by clinging not to our own good works but by clinging to the good news of Jesus Christ the blood of Jesus God's son cleanses us from all sin the one who is faithful unto death the one who conquers by the blood of the lamb and by the word of the testimony

God says in verse 7 will have this heritage and I will be his God and he will be my son why son? it's not because God saves men only rather it's the fulfillment of God's promise to his people in Hebrews 1 5 you are my son today I have begotten you I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son but why a son?

because as Galatians 3 26 says for in Christ Jesus you are all men and women you are all sons of God through faith it's because the means by which we are saved is not ourselves but Jesus the son of God and we are in him united to him by faith the fact that we are God's son means that we have a heritage he says an inheritance remember what the father says to his elder son in the parable of the two sons or the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15 son you are always with me and all that is mine is yours that's what it means that God calls us his son and that we have a heritage that means all that belongs to God himself the kingdom the glory the dominion all belongs to us his heirs those who are in Jesus Christ this is the renewal for which we wait eagerly our adoption as sons redemption of our bodies so this is my final exhortation to you will you be an overcomer or will you be a suck comer will you conquer by the blood of the lamb will you hold on for dear life to the gospel of Jesus Christ till the end or will you be conquered by the dragon the beast and the false prophet verse 8 concludes this passage with a warning but as for the cowardly the faithless the detestable as for murderers the sexually immoral sorcerers idolaters and all liars their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur which is the second death this is not an exhaustive list of sins but these sins are representative of all the ways in which the early church addressed in Revelation 2 and 3 were struggling they were tempted by their cultures sexual immorality and sorcery and idolatry they were tempted to join the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared they professed to know God but denied him by their works they faced tribulation and poverty suffering and imprisonment and even death so many people many Christians were tempted to cower in fear and to be faithless to their Lord but God commends them not to fear what they are about to suffer and to be courageous and faithful if you have unrepentant sin in any of these ways your faith will not be the new heaven and the new earth it will be the lake of fire have you repented of all your sins and turned to Jesus alone similar lists of sins appear later later in this chapter in verse 27 as well as in chapter 22 verse 15 and both of them end with liars those who practice falsehood which is not insignificant when every fiber of your self-preserving and self-serving instinct tells you to embrace the lies of this world will you stand for God's truth when you feel tremendous pressures and manifold temptations from the world to forsake your allegiance to Jesus Christ will you belie your profession of faith and live in unrepentant sin let us not choose the fleeting pleasures of the world that is passing away and miss out on the new heaven and the new earth let's pray together oh father my words cannot accomplish this

may your word just grip and pierce our hearts this morning so that that new heaven and new earth that is coming feels even more real to us than our present first heaven and earth preserve us by your grace and help us to persevere with courage faithfulness in Jesus name we pray amen amen to us