

***I AM MAKING ALL THINGS NEW!*****Revelation 21:1-8****(Read Revelation 21:1-8)**

**Intro:** My brother Phil is restoring a 1953 Ford truck. He wanted a 1952 because that is his birth year but was not able to find one, or at least, one that could be restored the way he planned. It has been a long process that has seen him take the truck apart piece by piece and he is restoring, or is having someone else restore, each piece very carefully. The truck was a rusting heap, but slowly and steadily it is becoming new again. He and his wife are in Tucson, Arizona right now, where they are visiting with their son Jessie and his family. Last week, as they were on their way west they stopped and visited with us for a couple wonderful days. On their way home they are stopping to visit friends in Cincinnati, Ivan and Janet Byers (Ivan is the cousin of our former bishop John Byers). One reason they are stopping is to pick up some fenders Ivan has restored for him. The end product will be beautiful. It will be something he and Judy will take for Sunday drives when the weather is perfect. It will be something they will show off at classic car shows. It will be something they keep in the garage and away from foul weather. It will not be a hunting truck. It will not be the truck Phil uses to haul firewood at the cabin – because, despite all that restoration, it will still be a 1953 truck. Even if it has that beautifully restored V8 motor, it will not be his work truck – it will be his beautifully restored 1953 truck. If he wants a good truck to drive in the snow, or to haul hunters on a deer drive or to tow his camper or his boat, he needs his 2019 Ford truck. It's up for the job with all the enhancements that have come with 70+ years of automotive engineering. His 1953 had no seatbelts or airbags and in comparison to his new truck is a deathtrap. His 1953 was made of steel and that is why he has to sand and sandblast and polish all those parts. His new truck is aluminum and doesn't rust. Even though his 1953 truck is going to be a sight to behold when he's all done with it, his new truck is far better suited for what he needs from day to day.

My poor analogy of Phil's truck restoration is an attempt to illustrate the promised renovation God has in store for his Church we see here in Revelation 21. It's the best we can do in comparison to God's declaration, **BEHOLD, I am making all things new!**

Thinking back over the past year, we have been through a lot as a congregation. We have experienced illness, accidents, recovery, and loss – but we have always known that our God has been walking with us as he promised. We have taken him at his word when he said, *I will never leave you nor forsake you.* Hebrews 13:5b. And that is because of the reality of the resurrection – Jesus rose and was victorious over death and sin and because of that – we are promised victory over death and sin. Two weeks from today is Easter – or **RESURRECTION DAY**, where we celebrate both Jesus's victory and also ours. J. Wilbur Chapman wrapped up those promises we have in Jesus in a single refrain – in a way it's the entire plan of salvation:

*Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me;*

*Buried, He carried my sins far away;*

*Rising, He justified freely, forever;*

*One day He's coming: O glorious day!*

He's coming to make all things new – we will be a new creation and not a rusty restoration that will break down, but will be new evermore. Let's look at how he will do that as we take a brief look at our text from Revelation 21.

First . . .

**The new will arrive and evil will be gone**

- In the previous couple chapters of Revelation, which are full of imagery that is mind-boggling and, for me, beyond adequate explanation, one thing is certain – Satan is defeated. Evil will be gone and all that will remain will be righteousness. This has been a long time coming as God has patiently worked with his creation to make all things new. Isaiah was pining for it when he wrote, *For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create a Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy.* Isaiah 65:17-18. The Psalmist was standing on the promises when he sang, *Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end.* Psalm 102:25-27

- Another interesting thing is that the sea will be gone. There are several reasons this is significant. First of all, the sea was a scary thing in 100 AD. It was a vast unknown with a mind of its own. It could be glassy smooth one moment and deadly with killer wind and waves the next. Even for mariners it was an evil place. In the thinking of that age the sea was the home of evil sea creatures like Leviathan that was reason enough to fear. Also, the sea was the dwelling place of Satan. Revelation 13 talks about the beast who comes from the sea – certainly a representation, at the very least, of the evil one. But, now, as we pointed out a bit ago, Satan has been defeated and evil is gone.
- What has come instead is . . .

### **A holy city**

- And it is us – the Church! There is a visual of us as a bride prepared for her husband. What bride gets ready for her wedding day by laying out her best pair of sweat pants and leaving the curlers in her hair? No! She does all she can to be stunning.
- I remember the Christmas Special at Messiah College in December of 1979. Kathy, who was and is the most beautiful girl I ever laid eyes on had never worn makeup prior to that night. Her friends applied mascara and blush and eye shadow and when she came into the lobby where I was meeting her to go to the dinner, she took my breath away. I'll never forget it! Rumor had it that my jaw hit the floor. She was beautiful and now she was even more beautiful.
- That is the New Jerusalem – the holy Church. We are God's called out ones and because of that we are beautiful, when the New Jerusalem comes down, we will be breathtaking – that is what holiness does.
- It's because . . .

### **God is with us**

- Look at verse 3 again, *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.* Revelation 21:3b. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.* 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 – so it's always been true for us – but now it's even more so. God will be dwelling with us. He will be dwelling in us.
- We will be restored to what was lost when Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden. We will again walk with our God in the cool of the evening. God is with us. Charles Spurgeon put it this way, *“This is the greatest glory of heaven, and the ultimate restoration of what was lost in the Fall. “I do not think the glory of Eden lay in its grassy walks, or in the boughs bending with luscious fruit-but its glory lay in this, that the ‘Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day.’ Here was Adam’s highest privilege, that he had companionship with the Most High.”* We will have companionship with the Father. Often when we visited my parents I would go for a walk with my dad. He had a three mile route and I loved that time with him. It's been almost thirty years since my last walk with him, but I still savor the memory – I miss it! And that's nothing compared to being with my heavenly Father and taking a walk with him.
- It is so awesome to think of when . . .

### **There will be no tears**

- David Guzik writes, *“The former things have passed away: The New Jerusalem is distinguished by what it does not have – no tears, no sorrow, no death or pain. Later it will be shown that the New Jerusalem has no temple, no sacrifice, no sun, no moon, no darkness, no sin, and no abomination.”*
- Just think about how much of the past year represents what we will not long have to deal with: Death will be gone. Grief will be gone. Pain will be gone. Crying will be gone. Indigestion will be gone. Arthritis will be gone. Cancer will be gone. PAIN WILL BE GONE! Thorns will be gone.
- The former things will be passed away. Joseph Seiss writes, *“Man comes into the world with a cry; and goes out of it with a groan, and all between is more or less intoned with helpless wailing... But the Halleluiahs of the renewed world will drown out the voice of woe forever.”*
- All because . . .

### **He's making all things new**

- Not a restored rusty hulk, but a new creation. When God finally completes this work of making all things new, they will stay new. Henry Morris said, "*Presumably this means not only that everything will be made new, but also that everything will stay then new. The entropy law will be 'repealed.' Nothing will wear out or decay, and no one will age or atrophy anymore.*" Oh wow! I'm looking forward to that! And it will be worth it all.

### **So let's be conquerors!**

- In each of the seven letters to the churches in chapters two and three we looked at over the past couple months there was a promise to the ones who would be conquerors and that promise is here for us. Let's listen again, *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.* Revelation 21:5-7. Conquerors have the ultimate heritage.
- But look at the alternative. Look at the ones who surrender to the things of this world in verse 8: *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.* Revelation 21:8. I'd love to be able to leave this out of this talk. I mean, I'd been doing so well, with all my talk about no more sorrow and no more pain and no more tears. But here I go talking about hell. Yep – that's what this is talking about. Hell is real. Don't believe anyone who teaches otherwise. But it can be avoided by being faithful. Hell is the destination of the rebellious. Heaven with all its newness and perfection is the destination of those who have chosen to walk with Jesus. Our eternal destination is our own choice.

**Conclusion:** As we approach Holy Week next week we can bask in the new life and new creation that was made possible by Jesus's defeat of death when he rose from the grave on that first Easter. It was a new day. It pointed to the final destination of a new heaven and a new earth. It's ours for taking him at his word when he said, Behold, I am making all things new. Amen.