

6th Sunday after Easter
May 21/22, 2022

What is heaven going to be like? We are given metaphors. Why? The only thing I can think of is that what is and will be, what we call heaven, is beyond our ability to grasp. What I do know is that Jesus will be there. That really is enough. The rest is pure speculation, except that which the Lord has revealed. There is enough speculation in this world that we are much better off simply focusing on what God has told us.

Listen to the description, not seeking to comprehend it for making a visual picture, but hear the reality of what the culture will be like in contrast to our own day and age. There is no temple. Our dwelling is with the Lord and He with us. We won't go to church, we will all, from the least to the greatest will understand, perhaps for the first time, that we are truly the body of Christ, that we are the church. We will be unified, of one mind and spirit, all seeking to do that which is pleasing in the Lord's sight. It won't be about church attendance, posturing, pretending that we are better than we know ourselves to truly be. It will not be a short time in the week or even the day. We shall praise and worship our God and Creator continuously. We will be, for the first time, fully ourselves. Everyone will love everyone else.

The city will have no need of either the sun or the moon. There will be no back alleys, dark places, of areas where we are frightened. No evening lighting of the streets. Everyone will be able to see things as they truly are. The glory of the Lord will shine in all quarters and at all times. To use a metaphor, it will forever be like a bright, beautiful, glorious morning illuminating the truth of our Savior Jesus, a morning that never ends. All will know Him and we shall know fully even as we have always been fully known. It will still be a society, but not like any we have ever known or have even thought of. We know that there will be no more tears, no more sorrow, no more gnashing of teeth. The old order of things will have passed away.

There will be no insurance, for the Lord is our assurance. There will be no catastrophe, floods, pestilence, or calamity. There will be no crime, nor any criminals. There will be no police force, for all shall obey the Lord. There will be no such thing as a key or lock, for all shall dwell in safety. There will be no jails, cartel, gang, or mob, just peace and security. Gates will never be shut and obstacles to freedom shall be forever banished. People from all tongues, folk, and nations shall come and go freely in peace and with joy. All shall gather around the Lord bringing their praise and thanksgiving.

There shall be nothing unclean. Everyone is truthful. Everyone is honest, seeking what is best for the other. No one seeks to take advantage of others. They respect other's time, show up on time, keep appointments, do not take from other's time when given time. They understand and do not blame. They do not think in terms of privilege or rank, but from the greatest to the least, are honored and respected.

There will be nothing foul. No one will be offended, nor offend. Everything once hidden is revealed. There will be nothing crude. There will be humor, but never at the expense of another. No one will try to deceive another. No one will try to take anything. Goods, relationships, property will be inviolably respected. No trespassing, pickets, or demonstrations shall cry out. There will be justice and all shall dwell in the common bond of love. The citizens will be those who love the Lord and heed His voice.

All shall be provided for. There shall never again be a time of hunger or deprivation. The lion shall lay down with the lamb. A child will be able to put their hand in the nest of a viper and there shall come of it no harm. Food and nourishment shall be plentiful and no one

shall want. Everyone's cup shall overflow. All of the strife will be gone and there will be healing such that there shall never again be sin, rebellion against the Lord, or the selfish ambition which has consumed this age.

Nothing accursed shall be found, but all will worship the Lord, the Creator and Redeemer of their souls. All shall see that we indeed have been created in the image of the One who made us. We shall all love as we first were loved. We shall understand, having come out of the great tribulation which is this age. It will be revealed that the Lord is our light and no longer shall we live in the reflected light of this age, which pales in comparison, but in the true light which illumines every heart of those who walk with the Lord.

Does all of this sound too good to be true? In this world, it really is wishful thinking, but this is what is promised for those who overcome in this age. There is nothing in this age, not even the whole world, if offered, that comes close to what is promised to those who come into the salvation which is ours through Christ. This is why we are told to keep our minds, hearts, and souls upon Christ Jesus. This world is filled with strife, but the strife is but for a moment. What is four score and a few years compared to the inexpressible glory of heaven some of which we have this mortal glimpse in the promise of Scripture. All that is wrong will be made right. All that is wrong in us shall be healed.

In knowing these things that Jesus gave us, His peace which surpasses all understanding is ours. Knowing these things and living for them in faith, we have the peace which surpasses all understanding. What is any momentary suffering compared to the weight of glory when we are finally in the new Jerusalem. We have been given the Holy Spirit to lead us each step of the way and day by day. When we stumble, we shall be lifted up. When we become arrogant, we shall be brought down. We are reminded that the author and finisher of our faith is leading the way, preparing beforehand, heading to that place where we are going.

At just the right time and in the right place, our Lord has provided for our every need. He has cleared the way before us so that we can journey in faith and reach the prize of the race we are running. Run so as to win the prize. Know that our Savior has enabled you to complete the journey.

There is much to be done, for the world around is filled with people who have no hope. They are floundering. Smugly they may say that they believe in no god, but then contradict themselves by being angry at the lack of justice in this world. Something, if not someone has made rules. If everything were random, we should not be able to know that there was such a thing as order or justice. The real issue is that people want what they want, the way they want, as they want, when they want, and how they want things to be. We know this, because we too have acted this way. Through Christ, we have been set free from the bondage to sin and death in order that we might have new lives that are being prepared for what is to come. Live faithfully, consistently, and in the hope which is yours in Christ. He who has redeemed You is more than able to do these things. You have His word on it.

Brothers and sisters, the world has been in a free-fall since the days of Adam and Eve. The best we have ever experienced is less than the worst of what could be experienced in eternity's heaven. The worst we have experienced is nothing compared to having all that is glorious in heaven removed for those who will remain forever apart from the Lord our God.

Live richly in the faith which is yours. If ever brought to trial, may you easily be found guilty by the weight of the evidence of your life as one who is a Christ-follower. Live for Christ knowing what lies before you. Amen.