

SERMON – PASTOR GREG
6.11.2022

HEAVEN IS OUR FUTURE. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Today we remember the saints that have gone before us. The saints who are people who have put their trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Let us pray.

HEAVEN. What do you imagine heaven to be like? Most of us have seen movies which have a vision of heaven which often includes pearly gates, an old man with a long beard- Peter- at the gates, cherubim flying around with harps and bright lights. The Bible has very different pictures of heaven.

Isaiah 6:1-8: *In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the LORD seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings...and they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty, the whole earth is full of His glory."*

And in Revelation 4:1-11. *After this I looked and there before me was a door standing open in heaven...At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the One who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones and seated on them were twenty-four elders. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing...Four living creatures who never stop saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come.*

Revelation 5:6-14. *Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the centre of the throne (and the four living creatures and the j24 elders) fell down before the Lamb...and they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain and with your blood you purchased men (and women) for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand...in a loud voice they sang, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain..."*

Revelation 7:9-17: *After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count from every nation, tribe people and language standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing jwhite robes and holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb" And who are these people- the saints of God- those who have come out of the great tribulation- those who have remained faithful to God and to the Lamb. Those people who were set apart for service to God- those people who were declared to be saints- those people who have been baptised and put their trust in Jesus Christ- the Lamb of God who has taken away the sin of the world. Those people who have died in Christ through their baptism as we hear in Romans 6 at most Lutheran funerals. People just like you and me.*

There are more descriptions of heaven in Revelation 21:1-4; 22-27 and 22:1=5. Here we hear of a new heaven and new earth, of a wedding banquet, of a city without a temple, without a sun and without a moon *for the glory of God gives it its light and the Lamb is its lamp.* And a river- *the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month.*

The descriptions of heaven are meagre in God's word but they are there. But in essence and of utmost importance is the description of God being with His people in a place without time and without sin or death or suffering or tears. A place of joy and peace and love.

WHO WILL BE THERE?

John 3:1-5. (v5) *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."*

Acts 2:37, 38. (V 38) *"Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins".*

John 11:25, 26. *Jesus said to (Mary), "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

Ephesians 2:1-10. (v8) *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works.*

Romans 10:9. *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord" and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

John 14:1-6. *Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am... I am the way, the truth and the life. No comes to the Father except through me.*

Who will be there? You and me- because we believe that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

WHAT WILL WE BE DOING IN HEAVEN? What do you think you will be doing in heaven? What are looking forward to in heaven? What will you miss on earth?

We will be praising God- Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Revelation 4:8; 5:9-14; 7:9-12.

We will be seated at the right hand of Christ: Ephesians 2:6. *And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.*

We will not be married. Mark 12:25. *When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.*

We will have a glorified body: 1 Corinthians 15. Verses 42-44, 49. *And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven (Jesus Christ).*

There will be great celebrations. Psalm 23; Matthew 22; Revelation 21.

And maybe we will be working! Way back in Genesis 1: *God created man in His own image, and God blessed them and said to them, "BE fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. Adam and Eve and all human beings were created to be in a right and loving relationship with God and to be stewards of His good creation. To care for the soil and the animals and the sea and all of God's good creation and this work would be enjoyable and satisfying. And I look forward to working in God's new creation free from all that makes work hard and difficult here in this time.*

Our future is with God- Father, Son and Holy Spirit and in His new creation. Until that time, we are called to trust in Him, to receive from Him and to do the good works which God has prepared for us to do while we still live in this earthly body. Our journey will be difficult but the rewards are wonderful- life for ever with God and all those saints who have gone before us. To see Jesus Christ- face to face. Amen.