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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
November 20, 2016  
27<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: Hebrews 12::18-24; Luke 12:35-46

Hymns: 604; 613; 305; 313:2

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Revelation 21:1-8

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. <sup>2</sup>Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. <sup>4</sup>And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

<sup>5</sup>Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

<sup>6</sup>And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. <sup>7</sup>He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. <sup>8</sup>But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

(NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.  
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: The Glorious Visions of Revelation --

The visions of Revelation were written for times like these in which we live. John saw visions of Jesus bringing messages for the churches intended to remind them that even in the face of persecution, in the face of great evil in this world the victory has been won. The final outcome of all things was already written. It is as our text declares: “**He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful’**” (v.5). At the same time it was important for the readers of this last book of the Bible to remember that these visions are just that, visions which are most often figurative in nature, personifying the evil in this world, and revealing that the evil shall be overcome.

Our text this morning on this last Sunday of the Church year, is in the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter Revelation, the second to last chapter of the book. In this vision the Lord Jesus revealed to John the glory and the splendor of what was to come. While certain aspects of this vision may be borne out to be true in a literal way, this is still a vision, a vision that is revealing something that is beyond our experience, so it is also beyond our ability to fully comprehend. In this vision Jesus reveals --

**THEME: The Glories of Eternal Salvation.**

The glories that await us begin with --

### **I. A New Heavens and a New Earth**

**Revelation 21:1,4-5** “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ...<sup>3</sup> I heard a loud voice from heaven saying <sup>4</sup> ‘God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ <sup>5</sup> Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’”

If these words are describing a vision that only depicts what the end of the world will be like how can we tell what we are to expect? First of all we have other scriptures that explain in similar language what will take place on the last day. We read in Peter's second epistle:

**2 Peter 3:12-13** “looking for ... the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

This is the assurance that Jesus is bringing us in our text. The world we live in right now has been impacted by the corrupting power of sin. Sinful mankind has brought such grief into creation that even the creation exists in the hope of deliverance from sin's corruption. So that the Apostle Paul tells us in his epistle to the Romans:

**Romans 8:19-22** “For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup>For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; <sup>21</sup>because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. <sup>22</sup>For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.”

So then what is described in our text is not a dooms day. It is a day of redemption; a day of deliverance! While it is the end of the world as we know it, it will be the beginning of a renewed creation which is not subject to corruption. The evil will be gone, completely gone, and will be gone forever. That is the significance of the statement of the vision that there will be no more sea. In the visions of Revelation evil rises up from the sea time and again. Our text's assertion that there will be no more sea is not to be taken literally, but rather for the significance that the source of all evil will be removed. Remember how Peter explained that in there will be a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. We will live in righteousness and only righteousness, and all the negatives that sin brought into the world and into our lives will be gone, gone, GONE!

In the vision John heard the voice from heaven declare that God shall wipe away all tears, there will be no more pain, no more sorrow, no more disappointments. The former things will have passed away. But the Lord declares that He makes all things new! All things shall be as God had made them in the creation when He saw all that He had made and it was **very good!**

The vision continues with a revelation of our place in this new creation, for we shall be a part of --

## **II. The New Jerusalem**

**Revelation 21:2-3** “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.”

Again we need to recall that we are reading a vision. It is quickly evident that these words don't describe a physical city, but a spiritual reality. These words go on to describe how the New Jerusalem shall be adorned as a bride is adorned for her husband. So the Church is adorned as the bride of Christ. We are included in this spiritual adorning. We are dressed in the glorious white robes of Jesus' righteousness. We are resplendent in glory, not of our making, but that glory which is ours in Christ. This glory shall be ours forevermore when Christ calls us forth from our graves, and we shall be raised incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15:52) and full of glory. **“We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is”** (1 John 3:2). Then we shall be together with all the saints, and we shall be with the Lord.

The tabernacle of the Lord will be with men. The tabernacle was a tent structure used in the Old Testament to signify God's dwelling place among the people of Israel. The reality of that image shall come to its fullest completion with Christ's coming. We will be with the Lord. His dwelling place will be with us. He shall be our God, and we shall be His people in a perfect harmonious

relationship. Nothing will disrupt that harmony between us and our God forever.

This is what we are looking forward to having when Christ returns. But now, now we live in this world with all its evil, with all its pain, with all its sin. Its gets really ugly. Sometimes in our weakness we might think heavenly glory is so distant, so remote, we wonder, “Will ever come to pass? Will it ever be real?” This wondrous revelation was presented to the Apostle John so that we might possess –

### **III. The Security of Knowing “It Is Done!”**

**Revelation 21:6-7** “And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. <sup>7</sup>He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”

Once more Jesus speaks to undo the doubts that life in this present world might instill in our hearts and minds. There is no doubt about the victory that Christ has won for us. He died for and rose again and the victory was secured in His resurrection. The victory is secure for all time. Jesus declared from the cross, “It is finished.” The debt for mankind’s sin was fully paid. Our redemption was complete. Jesus rose again the third day and showed that death is vanquished. It is done! It’s not as good as done! IT IS DONE! Our salvation is secure.

Jesus refreshes us now, and forever with the waters of life which quench the thirst of our parched souls. So as it is today that as we gather around the Word we are refreshed with the waters of life, so it shall be forevermore. We have this certainty established in Jesus who is the eternal God. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the eternal God, our Savior from sin and death.

The world would not only undermine our confidence of salvation but would also seduce us with its allurements to the pleasures of the flesh. So the Lord reminds us of the wages of sin and impenitence.

**Revelation 21:8** “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

That tragic outcome is as real and certain as the heavenly glory Jesus purchased for all of sinful mankind. Those who are caught up in a web of sin, those who turn away from Christ in favor of fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, they face certain and everlasting death and torment. It is as sure and certain as the coming of the end of the world. Perhaps we could call this aversion therapy. Perhaps we should call it a reality check. This is what Christ has saved us from, for He would not have us perish, but have eternal life. He has just revealed for us how it is that everything in this world will perish, and we shall be saved. So the Apostle Peter focuses us on our response to this message of grace found in Last Day.

**2 Peter 3:11** “Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness.

It would be the epitome of foolishness for us to hear all about how this world is passing away with everything in it, and how God is going to make us a home in a new creation which shall be perfect in every way, and then go on living as if none of that is really going to happen, that only what we know of this world matters. Remember Jesus said, “**It is done!**”(v.6) He also said, “**These words are true and faithful**” (v. 5). Not only is all going to happen as Jesus promised, this is the reality, the unseen reality of the world right now. So let’s grasp that reality, and avoid the tragic end that worldly living will inevitably give.

What manner of persons ought we to be? Persons who live each and every day for Jesus, to the praise of His glory. People who live in the knowledge that this world is passing away so we look for a better homeland, a heavenly homeland, and by the power of God the Holy Spirit we are going to strive to secure that future. We shall shun sin; we shall lay hold of righteousness. We live with Jesus now, and shall live with Him forevermore in glory, for Jesus has revealed for us the glories of eternal salvation; and IT IS DONE!

**AMEN.**

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans15:13)