

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

How We Will Relate to God in Heaven

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 90-313

Now we've been talking about glorification. It's...it's a critically important thing for us to understand because it is the end of our salvation. Let me take you, to begin with, to John chapter 6 and just set a few passages with which you are familiar back in your mind by way of remembrance. And then we will move from there.

In John chapter 6 Jesus in verse 37 and following speaks about the promise and inevitability of glorification for all who come to Him. Verse 37, John 6, "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out, for I have come down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me, and this is the will of Him who sent Me that of all that He has given Me, I lose none, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him may have eternal life and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

There in the words of the Lord Jesus comes the promise of final glorification. Divine, effectual calling is expressed in the Father giving. Salvation is expressed in the Son receiving. Security is indicated in His statement, "I lose none." And final glory in the promise that I will raise him up on the last day. Full glory. Not only our spirits, as we have learned, but resurrection bodies as well.

In Romans chapter 8, again another Scripture to bring back into your minds because it is so important in foundational thinking about this doctrine. In Romans 8:28 there is this golden promise that all of us become fairly familiar with early in our Christian experience. "We know that God causes all things to work together for good." You understand there that God is the cause, that divine power is at work not in some things, not in most things, but in all things. "God causes all things, leaving nothing out, to work together for good." Another way to say that is because of the power and the purpose of God, nothing can work together for anything but good. "Not for everyone but to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose, His divine elective sovereign purpose which resulted in an effectual call to salvation which transformed us into lovers of God, and now for us God is causing all things to work together for good." And the reason is, verse 29, "For whom He foreknew," that is predetermined a relationship with, knew in an intimate and personal way, "long before," that would be before we were born, before time, "whom He foreknew He also predestined and to...what?...to become conformed to the image of His Son." We were predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. That is, we were predestined to become like Christ. That's

glorification. "In order that He, Christ, might be the *prototokos*, the premier one among many brethren," many who are like Him. So we are a redeemed humanity who are in some way made like the incarnate Christ. It is in order that God may bring us into conformity with the image of His Son so that He can have us as eternal brothers, that God chose us, predestined us, regenerated us and keeps us. And in keeping us, overrules all evil and causes everything to work together to a good and glorious end.

Summing it up, verse 30, "Whom He predestined, these He called. Whom He called, these He also justified. Whom He justified, these He also glorified." Whomever it is that God predestined, He called. This again is an effectual calling, that is it is an irresistible calling. Another way of really describing regeneration. And whomever He calls effectually, irresistibly and regenerates, these He also justifies...that is declares them righteous by faith in Christ and these He also glorifies. The point is that the purpose of God from the very beginning was our glorification.

One other text of Scripture, Ephesians chapter 1, just so we understand the sweeping nature of this doctrine and then we'll kind of dig in to some other things in the little Bible study we're going to do tonight, covering not little themes but vast ones, little in the sense of brevity. But in Ephesians chapter 1 it's important for us to understand the essence of God's eternal purpose. Verse 3 begins with a familiar words, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ." God is to be honored, God is to be glorified, God is to be blessed as the source of every spiritual blessing which is ours in Christ. These are by nature heavenly blessings. We were not saved primarily for earthly blessing, we were saved in order that we might be given blessings which are by character and definition heavenly.

Then he goes on to say, "Just as He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world," and there we are back to that great doctrine of sovereign election. "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him." What do you mean by that? "He chose us for ultimate holiness, ultimate perfection that we would one day stand before Him holy and blameless. In love, He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself we have been adopted as sons through Christ to God, we are now sons of God according to the kind intention of His will to the praise of the glory of His grace."

The whole point is this. It is all by grace to His eternal praise. "Grace, by the way, verse 6, which He freely bestowed on us in the beloved one in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us." We didn't earn it. We can't become worthy of it in this life. It is all of grace. God's purpose in choosing us was to bring us to glory, holy and blameless before Him as His own sons as we saw earlier, brothers to Christ. This was His purpose in the beginning in order that forever and ever His grace may become the reason for our eternal praise.

Drop down to verse 11. "To the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory." Down to verse 14, "Who is given as a pledge," speaking of the Holy Spirit, "with a view to the redemption of God's own possession to the praise of His glory." That the whole point of salvation is to the eternal praise and glory of God. The reason that we were chosen, the reason we were predestined, the reason we were regenerated, the reason we were adopted as sons, the reason we have been forgiven and been redeemed by grace, lavished on us is in order that forever we will be to the praise of His glory, the praise of that particular aspect of His glory, namely His grace. There will never be any explanation for our presence in heaven except it is an act of God by grace. And that's why we started in 1 Peter 1:13 four weeks ago where it says, "Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." The final grace, the future grace, the ultimate grace is our eternal glory.

In the light of this, one of the most, I would say, discouraging, only it's more severe than that, one of the most disparaging..it's worse than that...one of the most fearful, one of the most unnecessary and far worse than that, one of the most injurious errors in terms of striking a blow on the character of God, striking a blow on the nature of grace, striking a blow on the significance of salvation is the idea that you can lose your salvation. It fails to understand salvation at all. It fails to understand that the plan of God in salvation began at election and consummates in glorification and no one is lost on the way...no one. You were saved for eternal glory. It should be for all of us a concession of some sort that we are even left here. Make the most of it, enjoy it, take in all the richness that God provides, but do not allow yourself to become content with this life. You have been chosen for glory, nothing short of that should satisfy you. Nothing short of that will satisfy God. When you were saved, the day you were regenerated and put your trust in Christ and were justified, it was for your eternal glory. And we have already learned that when we die as believers, our spirits go immediately into the presence of the Lord. We pointed that out, Philippians 1 simply says, "Far better to depart and be with Christ," there's no middle experience of limbo, purgatory, or soul sleep. Second Corinthians 5, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord," nothing in between. Your spirit goes immediately to be with the Lord. Your body as of all the saints through the ages, in fact all of humanity goes into the ground or into the sea or into the fire or somewhere and remains on this earth in some form, waiting the great future event, the resurrection which all the bodies of all the people who have ever lived will be raised. When a believer dies, their spirit goes immediately to heaven. When a non-believer dies, their spirit immediately goes out of the presence of God into an area of eternal punishment. In both cases some day there will be a resurrection. The bodies of believers will be brought out of the grave when Jesus comes descending from heaven with a shout and the dead in Christ rise first in the case of the church. A little after that in the case of the Old Testament and Tribulation saints when Jesus returns in His glory with His church, then the saints of old are resurrected and the completion of God's redemptive plan started in the Old Testament will be finished and we'll all be absorbed into the final glory of the heaven of heavens, the new heaven and the new earth. There will be also at the return of

Jesus Christ the resurrection of the unrighteous, called the Great White Throne Judgment when the sea and the land will give up their dead from all history. They will be judged and the spirits of the damned will then be joined to eternal bodies which will suffer in the final form of hell called The Lake of Fire.

But let's just look at what happens to believers. We will be joined body and spirit in the presence of the Lord. We wait, says Romans 8, the redemption of our bodies. We wait the redemption of our bodies clearly promised in Scripture at the return of Jesus Christ in the future. This is how it ends. This is the glory that we wait for. It strikes me as a terribly tragic thing to minimize heaven and equally tragic thing to minimize the return of Christ and the future resurrection. There is a trend these days, believe me, there is a trend to deny the resurrection. It's an old trend, it started back in 2 Timothy 2 verse 18 where it is noted there that some were saying the resurrection has already passed, what is called preterism or hyper-preterist has been around a long time. But the story has an ending and the ending is laid out in Scripture, God has a goal and a purpose for this world for the redeemed and for the lost. It is all divinely planned out and it comes to consummation in the glory of the return of Christ. Because this is so connected to this, going forward in our studies on doctrine, I want to do a study on eschatology. Okay? So we'll start that in a few weeks. By the way, I meant to say next Sunday night because I'm going to finish this up tonight, I'm going to do a study on the role of Mary in Catholicism. I've been telling you about that, get ready, it's next week. I can't hold it in any longer. Next Sunday night we're going to look at the bizarre idolatry and blasphemy in the worship of Mary, but for tonight, let's get back to our subject.

Now, when we get to heaven in our spirits, all that God has planned for us is there waiting. There is no need to think we're there in spirit and we just stand around till our bodies arrive, what do we do? We enter fully into the glories of heaven. There is no sense of time so there's no sense of waiting. I don't know how that all works in a timeless environment. But all that the Bible tells us about dying is that we are immediately in the presence of the Lord, in the fullness of all that He has promised us. So let's talk about that a little bit.

What is going to be our relationship to God in heaven? And I'll just ask a few questions tonight as we've been doing and try to answer them, just some very simple things. This is the best we can do and just kind of take you through a little Bible study, keep it basic and foundational because some of you are so new to this. We will be with God in heaven. We will be with the Lord Jesus in heaven. That is the main attraction. John 14, let me just kind of take you around a little bit and show you some of these wonderful texts, very familiar, John 14, "Let not your heart be troubled or stop being troubled." Jesus had told the disciples He was leaving them, obviously this was horrifying to them. "Stop letting your heart be troubled, believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house there are many dwelling places, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

Let's get this right, okay? "In My Father's house are many rooms and I am going to prepare a room for you in My Father's house." The Old English said, "In My Father's house are many mansions," which didn't make sense. How can you have mansions in a house? The Greek is rooms in a house, that makes a lot of sense. We're going to live in the Father's house, not ten blocks down and fourteen blocks to the right and further away from the Father's house, the more we sinned or failed to serve. We are all in the Father's house.

And here's the wonderful reality. Verse 3, "I will come again and receive you to Myself that where I am, there you may be also." You're going to come into eternal fellowship with the Son of God, eternal fellowship with the Lord. Now look over at 17 of John and verse 24 and Jesus praying this wonderful prayer to His Father, verse 24 of John 17, "Father, I desire that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am in order that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me. For Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world." "Father, He says, bring Your promised plan to fruition. The ones You have given Me whom I have received, whom I keep, whom I raise, I long that they be with Me in order that they may behold My glory, the glory You gave Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world."

What does it mean to go to heaven? It means to be in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. It means to be in His presence and see His full glory, something like Peter, James and John saw on the Mount of Transfiguration and were stunned and overcome and sent into a faint and a coma, if you will, because of the shock of it. We will, however, be suited for such a beatific vision, such a magnificent display of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can say then that the essence of our relationship to God in heaven will be fellowship, communion, we will be in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and we will see Him in His full glory, incarnate and resurrected and ascended glory.

Look at 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 where we read at the time of the Rapture of the church, something we'll talk about in our study of eschatology, when we are caught up in the air with the dead in Christ when the Lord comes for His church, we who are alive and remain, 1 Thessalonians 4:17, shall be caught up together with Him in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and thus we shall always be with the Lord. And that last little phrase is the key phrase, "with the Lord...with the Lord...always with the Lord, forever and ever enjoying the glory of communion and fellowship with Him."

Turn to the twenty-first chapter of Revelation. Let's broaden our understanding a little bit of this, just taking it as it comes in the Word of God. Not just the Lord Jesus Christ, but Revelation 21:3, "I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men and He shall dwell among them and they shall be His people and God Himself shall be among them.'" We will not only be in the presence of the Lamb of God, the Son of God, the glorified Christ, we will be in the presence of God Himself and He is depicted as having a very intimate and personal attention to us. He shall

wipe away every tear from their eyes and there shall no longer be any death, there shall no longer be any mourning or crying or pain, the first things have passed away. We will be in the presence of God.

Over in chapter 22 and verse 3 it says, "In this wonderful capital city of the eternal heavens, there is the throne of God and of the Lamb and His bondservants shall serve Him and they shall see His face and His name shall be on their foreheads." We will bear the very name of our Lord on our heads indicating that we indeed belong to Him.

What is if God that we will see? God is a spirit, how will we see God? Well verse 23 of chapter 21 gives you a little idea. "The city has no need of the sun, it has no need of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it and its lamp is the Lamb and the peoples, or nations, shall walk by its light and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it and in the daytime for there shall be no night there, its gates shall never be closed and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying shall ever come into it." Here is this glorious heaven, the final state, and radiating from the middle of it is the shining, blazing brilliance of the glory of God. God is a spirit, He has no flesh and bones, He has no body but He reveals Himself in supernatural illumination.

More about this earlier in chapter 21. We see in the holy city in verse 10, verse 11, "The glory of God," and it's amazing how this is going to work, the description is startling. The brilliance...and what you have, let me just give it to you simply, you have the infinite new heaven and the new earth, this is infinite, the new heaven and the new earth. But in the middle of it is the capital city of the eternal state which is the New Jerusalem. It is a cube and in the middle of this cube is the throne of God from which His glory proceeds. The streets are transparent gold so the glory penetrates them. The gates are massive pearls, one pearl for each gate, off of which the light dances and splatters into infinity. And everywhere there are jewels, everywhere. Verse 11, the brilliance is like a very costly stone, a stone of crystal-clear jasper. The capital city of heaven, this cubed heavenly city, massive in size, 1500 miles cubed, enough to hold the population of all the redeemed of all the ages in their resurrection bodies, is like a diamond. And out of the shining center comes the blazing glory of God. There are twelve foundations, the names of the twelve Apostles. Goes on to describe something of those foundations in verse 19, the first foundation is jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, and it goes on to name all these wonderful jewels. The streets of the city, pure gold, verse 21, like transparent glass. So the picture here is God is everywhere blazing His glory and its refracted and splattered through the transparency of these jewels, setting on fire the infinite new heavens and new earth with His glory. That's where we're going to live in His presence. Beyond that, 1 John 3:2 says, "We shall be like Him because we shall see Him just as He is." No more faith view, sight...perfect sight, perfect supernatural eternal vision of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So what will be our relationship to God in heaven? Fellowship. He will be there. He will be there in our midst. The Lord Jesus will be with us. We will live in the Father's house in a room prepared for us in unbroken personal communion with Him. We will see the glory of God. In the human realm in this world, no man can look on God's glory and live. We know that from Exodus 33. First Timothy 6:15 and 16 says, "Whom no man has seen or can see." First of all, God is invisible and if made visible through shining light, no one can look upon the full blaze of that light and survive. And so no one has seen or can see God, as John 1:18 says.

But, there's a reason why we cannot look upon the blazing glory of God, because we are impure. We would be consumed by it. Even Moses who wanted to see the glory of God could only see a little glimpse of it, you remember in Exodus 33. But Matthew 5:8 says, "The pure in heart shall see God." When there is no sin, when there is nothing to consume, when we are fully acceptable to God in utter holiness, we will then be exposed to a vision of God far grander than anything we could ever see here. David the psalmist in Psalm 42 said, "When shall I come and appear before God?" He said, "I will never be satisfied until I awake in His likeness." We will some day see Him and fellowship with Him in perfect glory. Now one other question I think we have time for tonight and that is...What are we going to do in heaven? And I know this is one people ask a lot and I get asked this question frequently and I just have to tell you...all I know is what the Bible says. But I'll give you a few things to think about, okay? A few pretty amazing and staggering things, as a matter of fact, to think about, stunning.

First of all, we will spend our time adoring Christ. We will spend our time in perfect worship. I don't know about you, but for me the highlight of the week is to worship with the people of God as to teach the Word of God, to celebrate its truth, to sing praise to His name. This is exactly what we will do in heaven. We have been called, according to John 4, by the Father to become true worshipers. God seeks true worshipers. God who is spirit, says John 4:24, seeks those who are true worshipers who worship Him in spirit and in truth. And while we're in the book of Revelation, if you're still there, turn back to chapter 14. There are a lot of glimpses of this here and all we can say is what is recorded here, very hard to go beyond that, pure speculation. But one thing stands out. All the glimpses of heaven reveal a worshiping environment.

There was an angel in Revelation 14:6 flying in mid-heaven. This during the future time of Tribulation, preaching the eternal gospel to those who live on the earth, to every nation, tribe, tongue and people. And saying with a loud voice...and here basically is the gospel... "Fear God and give Him glory because the hour of His judgment has come and worship Him, made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of water." What is the eternal message? What is the eternal good news? God is to be feared, given glory and worship. Because if you don't, judgment is coming. Worship God, worship God...that is what God demands, commands, and that is why God redeems, to produce worshipers. That is the eternal message...worship...worship, far more important even than

evangelism. Evangelism is just the problem that stands in the way of worship. And the reason you evangelize is so that the person who has not worshiped can worship. That's why when the church comes together, it comes together to worship. That's the highest priority for the church. Evangelism is the means to the end, but the end is worship and God is seeking worshipers and that's what will occupy us in heaven. We've already looked at it, but just a glance at Revelation 4 where you have all the beings in heaven, the redeemed represented by the elders, the angels represented by the living creatures, and other angels, all worshipping, Revelation 4:10, all worshipping. Down in verse 10 ...verse 12, I should say, of chapter 5, it starts in chapter 4 verse 10, jumping to chapter 5, the redeemed are around the throne, the elders around the throne, verse 11, the living creatures, the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands and thousands of angels are all there and they're all worshipping and every created thing in heaven, on earth, under the earth, on the sea and everything all together saying, "To Him who sits on the throne be blessing and honor and glory and dominion for ever and ever." That's the picture of heaven.

It doesn't end there. Chapter 7, interesting, in chapter 7 you have, for example, in verse 9, "A great multitude which no one can count, out of every nation, tribe, people, tongue, standing before the throne, that puts them in heaven, standing before the Lamb, they're clothed in white robes, the symbol of their righteousness. They have palm branches in their hands. They are crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, giving God and the Lamb glory for salvation, all the angels around the throne.'" Here the elders are again, representing the redeemed. The four living creatures, they all fall on their faces before the throne, they worship God saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen." This goes on, folks, forever...forever...forever. In fact, in verse 15 they are before the throne of God, they serve Him day and night in His temple and He who sits on the throne shall spread His tent over them. They shall hunger no more, thirst no more, neither shall the sun beat on them nor any heat, for the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their Shepherd and guide them to springs of the water of life and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes." Very intimate, very rich, very blessed as God shelters us forever as we worship Him.

Chapter 11 of Revelation, same thing, verse 15 talks about the kingdom of the world becoming the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and He reigns forever and ever. And when that happens, when history is consummated with the glory of Christ establishing His Kingdom which is eternal, the twenty-four elders who sit on the throne, again they are representative of the redeemed, they sit before God and they fall on their faces and they worship God saying, "We give You thanks, O Lord God the Almighty, who art, who wast because Thou hast taken Thy great power and begun to reign." Again this praise breaks loose. Again 15, chapter 15, you see the throne of God again and here is this sea of glass and the singing of the Song of Moses and the Son of the Lamb, "Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God Almighty, righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations. Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name for Thou alone art holy, all the nations come and worship

before Thee for Thy righteous acts have been revealed." Worship is the occupation of heaven.

Turn to chapter 19, just this one and we've already looked at 21 and 22. Verse 1, "After these things...John says...I heard, as it were, a loud voice, a great multitude in heaven saying, 'Hallelujah, salvation and glory and power belong to our God because His judgments are true and righteous. He is judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality. He has avenged the blood of the bondservants on her.' And a second time they said, 'Hallelujah, her smoke rises up forever.'" The twenty-four elders, there the redeemed again, joined with the representatives of the angels, the four living creatures, every one falls down, worships God who sits on the throne saying, "Amen, hallelujah," and a voice came from the throne saying, "Give praise to our God, all you His bondservants, you who fear Him, the small and great.' And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and the sound of mighty peals of thunder saying, 'Hallelujah, for the Lord our God, the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him.'" That's heaven...that's heaven...one eternal, unending paean of praise. Worship God, adore God, Christ.

There's a second aspect of our occupation in heaven and that is we will reign with Him. In the midst of this worship, we will be given some responsibilities. We will be given some functions, some duty. This will not be a benign environment, this will be an active environment, this will be an aggressively active environment. This will be one glorious adventure every conscious moment and they'll all be conscious since there's no night and no sleep. Every waking moment will be for us an explosion of glorious new reality. We will be challenged with new opportunities and new ministries that we never dreamed of. Jesus even said, "If you're faithful over little, you'll be lord over much." We will have responsibilities, functions that will occupy us. There will be no wasted moments. I think most people think of heaven as leisure. They think of heaven as like retiring forever, sitting on a cloud and plucking a harp. That is ridiculous. You will be busy. You will be occupied forever, relentlessly occupied. The difference will be you will never grow weary, you will never grow tired. Your energy will never be dissipated. First Corinthians 6:3 says, "We will judge angels." That is we will rule angels.

There's going to be a lot going on in eternity. I don't know what God has planned for eternity, but He has some amazing things planned for eternity. He had a little part of His plan was this little redemptive scheme going on on this planet dangling in the middle of infinite space, like some infinitesimal dot. We are now the participants in an amazing little plan for this little theater in the middle of His infinite universe. But believe me, this is not the only plan and when it has reached its fruition, God does not switch into neutral. Whatever it is that God has planned is going to involve us and is going to involve the holy angels who even now are sent to minister to us and throughout all eternity will be at our disposal as we will be ruling over them. We will be reigning with Christ, joint-heirs with Christ and He rules the angels and only for a little while was made lower than the angels.

Whatever it is we're going to do, we're going to be able to dispatch the holy angels of heaven to do what we've been given as an assignment in the great eternal adventure. I can't even begin to comprehend it, nor can you because I have no comprehension of living in eternal perfection and eternal glory. But the plans of God go on forever and they involve us.

That's back to Matthew 25, "Well done, good and faithful slave, you were faithful with a few things, I'll put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your Master." Being in charge of many things because you've been faithful over a few things here is going to be joy for you. Whatever our work is going to be, it's going to be a joyous work, an exhilarating kind of work, a level of joy the likes of which we have never ever known. I suppose down in this world there are joys in our labor. I'm sure some of you go to a job that you hate. Some of you may go to a job that you don't mind. And others of you may work in a place where you actually enjoy it. I'm privileged to do something that I love to do, but I don't love it all the time. It has its moments of pain and there are many times when I say to myself, "I wish I didn't have to do this. It's hard, it's relentless. They show up every week, they expect me to say what is profound, and to say something I haven't said for a long time." That's a great challenge and it's kind of a blessed bondage. But at the same time thinking about heaven, thinking about never sleeping, always serving, and always doing that which brings you limitless, unmixed joy and satisfaction.

In a similar accounting of the parable of Jesus, Luke 19 verse 17, He said, "Well done, good slave. Because you've been faithful in a very little thing, be an authority over ten cities. The second came saying, 'Your mina, master, has made five minas.' He said to him, 'You are to be over five cities.'" There are going to be degrees of responsibility. There are going to be something like cities, something like realms in eternity over which we will reign and rule and have angelic aide to serve us as we serve our great God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is an element now that comes to us from the word serve. We will worship. We will rule. And we will serve. Now we've already looked at Revelation but look at Revelation chapter 7, just to clarify one other time what we do by way of service. Verse 15, we read it a moment ago but I want to draw it back. Describing those who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, now appearing in heaven. They are before the throne of God, verse 15, they serve Him day and night...they serve Him day and night. There is no day, there is no night, but that's an expression all the time. We worship all the time. We rule all the time throughout eternity. And our rule is a way of serving the Lord, *latreuois* the Greek, religious service we render. Revelation 22:3 which we looked at a few moments ago says, "His bondservants shall serve Him...shall serve Him." It sounds like we're going to be busy, doesn't it? Constant worship, constant ruling over vast portions of the infinite heaven, constant unceasing service, no sleep, no night, I can't even comprehend it. And it's amazing to think about it in this fashion, but I want you to turn to Revelation 14 and just look at verse 13. You can't comprehend this but it's wonderful to imagine it. It will be reality. Verse 13, "I heard a

voice from heaven saying, 'Write blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" It's good to be dead. It's blessed to be dead if you die in the Lord. "That they may rest from their labors." Rest? I thought You just said forever we're going to be worshipping, spending all of our glorified energy in worship, forever we're going to be ruling and reigning as Christ dispenses to us the responsibility over ten locations or five or however many our service to Him has gained for us in that eternal reward. And we're relentlessly and unceasingly going to serve Him. By what definition can this be called rest? But we are at rest.

In the promise of the Word of God in the book of Hebrews, it tells us that to come to Christ is to enter a state of perfect rest. If we come to God through Christ, we enter rest. If we reject the gospel, God swears in His wrath, Hebrews 3:11, they shall not enter My rest. Verse 18, He swears again, "They shall not enter His rest." But for us who hear the gospel and believe it, a promise remains, Hebrews 4:1, of entering His rest. Verse 3, "We who have believed enter that rest." Verse 9, "There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for the one who has entered his rest has himself also rested from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest.

Now what he's talking about there in the terms of salvation is when you embrace the gospel you rest from any effort to earn your own salvation. You rest by faith in grace, you rest in the gospel, cease from your works, but entering into that saving rest will ultimately bring you to that eternal rest where forever you will rest from your labors. Heaven then is rest in the sense that there's no weariness, there's no suffering, there's no diminished power or capacity. That's why there's no crying, there's no pain, there's no sorrow. Everything we know about expended energy in this life is irrelevant in the life to come.

Having said all that, I think there's one more reality about life in heaven that always is the most stunning to me. It's found in the twelfth chapter of Luke. Some of you will remember our look at this. Luke chapter 12 had a whole section on the Second Coming of Christ which we told you about when we went through it some months ago. But I just want to draw you in to verse 35 and we'll read down to verse 40, Luke 12:

"Be dressed in readiness, keep your lamps lit. Be like men waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will gird himself to serve and have them recline at the table and come up and wait on them. Whether he comes in the second watch or even in the third and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. Be sure of this that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. You too be ready for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."

The imagery is pretty graphic here. There's a time when the Lord is going to come, you want to be ready when He arrives. It's like a master who went away. He's coming back, returning from a wedding feast. Be ready when He arrives. And when He does arrive, for those who are ready, verse 37, He will gird Himself...that means He'll put on a slave's apron...and He'll have the slaves recline...which means to take their place at the banquet...and He will come up and wait on them. To me this is the most staggering reality of heaven. It is not just where we worship Christ and the Father, it is not just where we rule and reign over the angels to do the duties that God has granted us as an eternal reward for our faithfulness, it is not where we just forever and ever serve the Lord in undiminished strength and power, but it, more amazing than all of those, is where we are seated at the heavenly banquet table as if we are the honored guests and the Lord Himself takes on the role of the waiter and the servant, puts on an apron and comes up and serves us. I don't know what that will mean but to think of the Lord Jesus Christ serving me is a phenomenal thing and doing so forever...forever.

This is the great love that God has for His own, expressed in its final form. This is the final grace. We started with fixing your hope on the grace to be revealed. Here is the final heavenly grace, that the Lord Jesus Christ will serve us forever. He will take the role of the slave, we will take the role of the honored guest and He will serve us forever. With all of that in view, the words of the Apostle Paul are helpful. "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth," Colossians 3:2. Join me in prayer.

Nothing that we have ever done could, Father, ever earn us any of this, that's why it's the final grace, a future grace, the ultimate grace and that Jesus will be our servant and we the honored guests at the heavenly table is beyond understanding. Why? To the glory of His grace all heaven will explode forever in loud and endless praise at such a God and such a Christ who would forever serve sinners in this way, who would forever serve enemies, blasphemers, wicked, God-haters, defiled and corrupt. What grace, what staggering grace. Not just the grace that rescues us from hell, not just the grace that lets us in heaven, but the grace that calls on the Son of God to serve us. And we should know for even here He came not to be served but to serve and give His life a ransom for many. Give us this heavenly glimpse, may our affections ever be there as we long for that day when we enter the eternal glory. For this incomprehensible grace we offer our gratitude and our praise and we fix our hope unwaveringly on what is prepared for us. We come before You humbled by this all, our Father, and thankful beyond expression but we will have a full eternity to offer our gratitude for Your work in us through Christ, in His name. Amen.

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