

Keep Your Head Up You Have A New Home

A Sermon on Revelation 21:1-6

Year C - Easter 5
24 - April - 2016

JJ¹

You may have seen it before: A family is really struggling, and one of the big struggles is the old, worn-out house that's too small and has so much to be repaired you're almost better off tearing it down and starting new. A community and television production company team up and build a brand new house for the family, complete with everything they need to help make their lives easier. Each child has their own bedroom that perfectly matches their personality. The master bedroom is a sanctuary for the parents. There is a big open kitchen and family room where they all can be together. There is no mortgage. Money is given to even cover the property taxes for years to come.

Then comes the big reveal. The family is brought home from the vacation they were sent on during the build. A huge RV stands between the family and the home. The family, community and production crew all shout out, "Driver, move that bus!" Suddenly, the cheering ends. The family walks away in disgust. They want their old house back. No, of course not! Their eyes fill with tears of joy. Maybe they crumple to the ground in shock, even before they go inside to see their new home.

Friends, in a way, the Apostle John got a preview of the big reveal of our heavenly home in our text today. As we explore these words today, you are given another wonderful reason to **KEEP YOUR HEAD UP** in this life because **YOU HAVE A NEW HOME!**

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband."

First John sees that this present world which is filled with sin has been made anew. Then he sees a new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. The Bible tells us that the new Jerusalem is Christ's Church of all believers (Gal. 4:21ff.; Heb. 12:22). And John says that the Church is so beautiful it looks like a bride who has been all gussied up for her husband. We'll talk about that image next week. But for today we look at this new home that our eternal groom, Christ, has prepared for us.

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them.

¹ JJ is the acronym for *Jesus Juve*, which is Latin for "Jesus Help". It is a short prayer used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the beginning of their work.

They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.' He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' "

When Jesus tells us that he is making everything new, the word he uses isn't really about something being new in time, but new as in better. Like those families who received those new homes, they certainly had memories with their old home, but the new home is a place for new memories and joys. Oftentimes those giveaways are done for families in hard times because a parent or child has some severe medical or physical struggles. The old home made it very difficult for the family to care for their loved one. The new home has all the amenities they need to care for their loved one.

Friends, our new home in heaven is so much more than that! There won't be any need for us to have to care for our loved ones, first, because there won't be any hindrance of sin, and second because God will provide all our needs. We see this in the fact that he will live with us! We who are separated from him by nature because of sin, will live with him! We who are only partially restored in our relationships with him in this life, will be

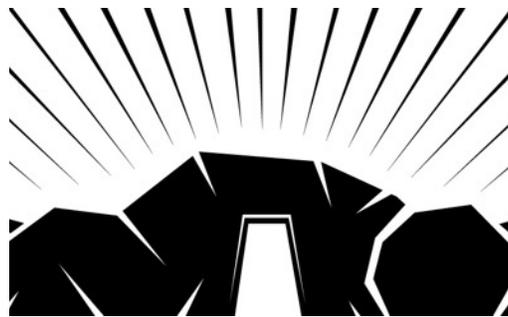
perfectly restored as we live together with him in the new home he has prepared for us! God will at last fully restore what Adam and Eve lost in the Garden of Eden. But when God restores it, it will be perfectly restored forever. God promises that he will make it so that sin can never come into the picture again. And he promises this in the most wonderful way.

"[God] will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." The worst part of the curse of sin is death.

This sinful world views death as a natural thing, but that couldn't be any farther from the truth! Death is the most unnatural thing in all creation. When God created the world, he made it to be a constant new without any ruin

or death. Adam and Eve destroyed that with their sin. When God makes it new on the Last Day, it will be new indeed! It will be new because on that day our Lord Jesus will defeat our last enemy—death (1 Cor. 15:26).

On the Last Day not one person will be forgotten in their graves. Each person will be raised. The unbelievers will be raised to suffer the eternal second death of hell. But we as God's people will be raised to eternal life with him in our new home. So many things in life bring mourning, crying and pain, but the biggest culprit of them all is death. But death



will not hold us any more than it could hold Christ in the tomb on Easter morning!

All those consequences of sin will end and every tear shall be wiped from our eyes all because Jesus endured all those things for us. Jesus lived with us for a time on this earth so that we could live with him forever in the new heaven and new earth. Jesus wept. Jesus mourned. Jesus suffered. Jesus even died, all so that one day you and I could be freed from all those things. And that's what John sees in this vision. He sees all of God's promises fulfilled. He sees sorrow, crying and pain have vanished from the existence of God's people in their new and heavenly home because "the old order of things had passed away."

Friends, because **YOU HAVE A NEW HOME** waiting for you in heaven, live your lives here in the old world accordingly. If the families in those home giveaways refused their new homes and would rather have the old, then they wouldn't get to enjoy the blessings of the new home. The same is true when it comes to our old home here on earth and the new heaven and new earth God will make our home on the Last Day. Therefore, don't hold too tightly on to this life and what it has to offer. There is far better waiting for you in heaven!

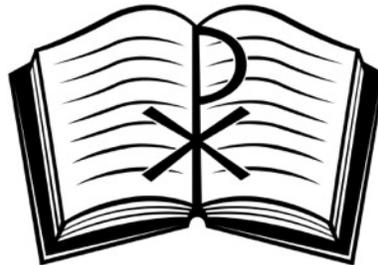
In fact, I just spoke about this with my Catechism class this last week. Some of

them were shocked to hear me say, "I want to go to heaven right now!" One of them responded, "Well, yeah Pastor, I know things are good in heaven, but what about all the stuff here?" I had to remind them a few times that life in heaven is better than anything we can imagine. I also told them that they'll want heaven more and more the older they get.

Friends, this life and all that is in it is going to pass away. So live your lives accordingly. Our task isn't to try and make a perfect life for ourselves here as if this world were our home. It's to share the

Good News with our mouths and by using the blessings God has given us to help send others to go to places we cannot go. That is our main goal as Christians in this world that will pass away. It's to bring a drink from the spring of the water of life

to those who thirst. Friends, we drink from that spring every time we hear the Gospel of our Lord. Just as our bodies thirst for H₂O every day, so too our souls thirst for the Gospel, the water of life. Keep drinking down that water of life and you'll be able to **KEEP YOUR HEAD UP** knowing that **YOU HAVE A NEW HOME** which will be revealed to you when Jesus takes you home. Amen.



SDG²

² SDG is an acronym for *Soli Deo Gloria*, which is Latin for “To God Alone Be The Glory”. This is a statement of humility used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the end of their work to let themselves and others know that it isn’t about getting glory for themselves, but about giving all glory to God.

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