

TEXT: Revelation 21:3-4

THEME: LIFE EVERLASTING

1. The Only Life Worth Having
2. The Only Way to Have It

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. 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." (Revelation 21:3-4)

Dear Fellow Triumphant Saints:

"What kind of work are you in?" people ask as they seek to find out more about you and your occupation. Now if you were to ask the Holy Spirit the same question, what might he say? Do you think his reply would be, "My work is to get people ready to live forever"? That's what this week in the Christian church year is all about: the LIFE EVERLASTING of the Saints Triumphant—you and me, and all true believers in Jesus Christ as our one and only Savior from sin. Life everlasting—it is:

THE ONLY LIFE WORTH HAVING.

Yet how do we tell someone about everlasting life? That's like trying to describe an elephant to an Eskimo who has never been near one or seen a picture of one. It's like trying to describe Beethoven's Fifth Symphony to someone who has never heard one of its majestic chords. It's even more difficult than that. Elephants and symphonies are a part of this world, but everlasting life is beyond our experience. We, who are so bound by the dimensions of time and space, by the ticking of the clock and the square footage of this world, cannot begin to fathom what life in heaven will be like.

Perhaps that's why the inspired authors in Scripture often start describing heaven by telling us what heaven is not. **"No more pain,"** John tell us in our text. We, who so often wrestle with and weary under pain, can nod somewhat in understanding. We can imagine no more pain. **"No more death,"** he also says, and again we, who are shrouded in death's shadow all our days, can take a hint. **"No more crying,"** he adds, no more tears inside our broken hearts or outside on our pillows because of the bumps and bruises, the hurts and hardships of life. In Revelation chapter 7, John points out something else that will be missing in heaven. When he describes the saints in heaven as dressed in white, he's indicating we'll be pure and holy. "No more sin," he's telling us—no more evil heart within to trip us; no more evil world around us to tempt us; no more evil foe to trick us, such as we experience each day of our earthly life. We have experienced, in this earthly life, short periods of no pain, no death, no crying...so we somewhat understand John's description of heaven in our text.

When Scripture goes on to tell us what heaven will be, then understanding becomes much more difficult. How do we wrap our minds around a life that never ends in an eternity that might be described as “God’s ever ever land”? How can there be “fullness of joy” when all our life we are so used to having joy and sorrow mixed, pleasure and pain intermingled? What can it be like to be ever with the Lord in a step-by-step walking with him—when on earth we so often stray from his side? And the sight of his loving face? How we’ve longed for it and wondered what it would be like. Just think—seeing and experiencing with both our body and soul the one loveliest to our eyes, dearest to our heart, most precious to our soul and never having the glorious sight blurred by sin again.

Let shortsighted people waste their lives by limiting them only to this ball of mud. Because of the Holy Spirit’s work in our hearts, our eyes are raised and our hearts set on the only life worth having, the everlasting life in heaven.

THE ONLY WAY TO HAVE IT

Sadly, not all people will enjoy everlasting life. Some will experience just the opposite. For them it will be everlasting damnation, worse than anything they could ever have imagined. To be locked up in hell and know that it is entirely their own fault. To see not God’s smiling face but his back as he turns forever away from them. To wish futilely that after a hundred thousand years, hell’s pain would end, but knowing it never will. God preserve each us from such an eternity!

In his grace he has! In his love he sent his Holy Spirit to work faith in our hearts so that our names are included in the “**whoever**” of John 3:16. God so loved the world and sent his Son to die for all sinners, but only “**whoever**” believes in him will have everlasting life. That’s what his Holy Spirit does for us. His work is to get us ready to live forever by bringing us to and keeping us in faith in the only way there is, the Savior Jesus Christ.



Let’s not wait until we stand in glory to enjoy the Holy Spirit’s gift of LIFE EVERLASTING. Let’s show in our daily lives that we know what we have in Christ Jesus. Let’s give generously, erasing the \$17,000 deficit in our General Fund before the end of the year, showing that we know what we have in Christ Jesus. Let’s also share the good news of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ with others what we have, showing that we know what we have in Christ Jesus. After all, that’s the reason the Savior still leaves us here on this earth once the Holy Spirit has readied us for heaven, after he has given us the life everlasting of the saints triumphant. Today, tomorrow, and forever, live as a triumphant saint! Let God’s people say, “Amen!”