

Blessed are the Dead that Die in the Lord

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- [0 : 0 0] A very warm welcome to our service this morning. A special welcome to those who are visiting with us. As we gather in God's name we pray his blessing upon his word.
- We can begin by singing to God's praise from Psalm 116. Psalm 116. And we're singing the first four stanzas.
- Verses 1 to 6. Psalm 116. I love the Lord because my voice and prayer he did hear.
- My while I live will call on him who bowed to me his ear. Of death the cards and sorrows did above me compass round. The pains of hell too cold on me.
- High grief and trouble found. Upon the name of God the Lord then did I call and say. Deliver thou my soul O Lord. I do thee humbly pray.
- [1 : 0 3] God merciful and righteous is. Yea gracious is our Lord. God saves the meek. I was brought low. He did me help afford. Let us sing these verses 1 to 6 of Psalm 116.
- I love the Lord because my voice and prayer he did hear. I love the Lord because my voice and prayer he did hear.
- Who will be from the Lord call on him. The power to me is the arm Of death, the heart and sorrow's day A heart meek of a shrine Thousands of hell to hold on me I give and love upon Upon the name of God the Lord
- Then get thy call and sing Be live, thou my soul, O Lord I do thee humbly bring God merciful and righteousness It is justice, O Lord God's vision he died He did me never for Let us join together in prayer
- Let us pray Eternal and ever-blessed God As we meet in your name We give thanks for the opportunity To do so For the privilege that we enjoy That we can meet and hinder And that we can hold the hope That you have given to us That where two or three are gathered together In your name there You are present also And we often refer to these words Without any comprehension Of how your presence will be made known to us We pray for that privilege today That you may make yourself known to us In a tangible way We know that you are speaking to us
- [4 : 5 0] In your word The word that bears your name And the word that you have given to us That you breathed out As you filled the mouth And the heart and the mind Of your servants of old That allows us to believe That the scriptures of the Old and New Testament Are the only rule to direct us How we may glorify and enjoy you Such is the power and potential That your word possesses That you are able to use it To quicken our sin-ridden souls And to stir us up To cry out to the heavens above For mercy And for grace To help in all our needs So bless us today
- Each one according to the need that we have Individual need That is ever with us As creatures of the dust Which is what we are We are mere sojourners in this world Pilgrims on the scene of time Whose presence here May be felt Or it may pass unnoticed There are so few Whose names are Rehearsed and recorded That are remembered And yet there are so many Whose lives in this world Seem to To have So little That is able to be said About it But It may well be the case That these very Very people Whether they are Male or female Young or old For all their Seeming

How they are Considered To be of Of little Interest to others They Their lives Seem to Others To be of No consequence And yet they They have so much Influence on So many lives By their By their Wisdom By their Desire to Support And help Others In a Very quiet And Seemingly Innocuous Way And yet The very Fabric Of our Society Would crumble Were they Not there So we see Things In In ways That Are a Testament To our Blindness When we Observe

Those who Have Made a Name for Themselves And We latch On to Their Every Word And we Think of Their Wisdom And their Lives And their Example And yet The reality Is that These very People might Have Little to Say to The way We live Our lives And the Way we Conduct Ourselves In the Communities We seek To serve Help us To realize That there Are There are Things that The God Of heaven Sees That we Do not And that Your estimate Of our Worth is Different To the Way that A mortal Man Credits Those who Are here In this World The day Of reckoning Can prove That And we Acknowledge It in Your presence Today So bless Us in Our lives As individuals

What we Do What we Say What we Mean to Others As Members Of families As heads Of families Those who Are husbands Wives Children Grandparents Those who Live solitary Lives Those who May be Intensely Aware of Their own Aloneness And yet In that Very Experience They Are Perhaps so Involved In the Community In different Ways Especially Your people Who have Been equipped To Pray for Others And who Do so In private And in Secret And who Have that Interest In the Lives of Others Spiritually And while Their Activity Which is So important May go And notice And yet They are So much Part of

[9 : 56] Of the Fabric Of what Holds us Together What binds Us and What What makes Our lives Meaningful We pray For the Spiritual Life Of the Community We pray For the Church For the Office Bearers For the Members For the Adherence For those Who see The building And yet Have little Interest On what Goes On in It Remembering The homes And the Households Of our Community We pray That you Would Visit them In Mercy That you Would Pour out Your spirit Upon us That That interest In the Things of God Would be Kindled By your Own Spirit And That they Would Cry out to God What must I Do to be Saved And seek it In the place That salvation Is offered Even through Christ Remember

Those Of our Number Who are Unwell We commit Them to You Remembering Those in Hospital Those who Are confined To their Homes Those in Hospice Those who Are burdened For loved Ones Who are Unwell We bring Their cares And concerns Before you The God Who is The physician Of souls And that you May remind us Afresh Of the power That you Possess To heal The sick And to Raise up Even those Who are On the Very brink Of death Itself We pray For your Blessing Upon the Sunday school That is to Re-commence Its teaching Today We remember Before you The young People And thank You for Them And we Pray for The lessons That they Learned That they Would indeed Remain with Them And impact

Upon their Thinking And upon Their lives For the Good Remember their Parents We thank you For them And for The way they Undertake the Duties that are Theirs to Look out also For the Spiritual Welfare Of our Young We ask We ask That as a Congregation We would Continually Pray for The young People who Are being Raised up In an Environment That is Good and Wholesome In so many Different ways Unlike other Communities that Do not have This privilege We pray for The world In which we Live Our part in It And ask That you Would remember Those who Rule over Us Our king His family Those who Serve in His name In the Various Parliaments In Holyrood And Westminster In a Local Council Those who Have been Called to Civic duties Of whatever Description May they

Be guided By the Light that You possess And may They seek It out That their Feet may Not wander From the Path of Righteousness For righteousness Alone Exhorteth a Nation We remember The war Torn Nations Of the Earth Pray for Peace And that Peace May be Brought Into that Conflict Where Neighbours Are at War And there Are so Many Instances Of that Even in Old day It was Commonly Thought that When peace Was called At the end Of a World war That Surely Lessons Had been Learned And actions Would be Followed That would Determine That peace Would be Honoured And yet Very quickly We have Seen How That is Not the Case And we Cannot But lift Our eyes And our Hearts To God That you

May show To us Where true Peace is To be Found Even in The gospel Of your Grace Bless us Together And grant Mercy for Our sins In Jesus Name Amen Amen Well boys And girls It's so Good to See you Here today I have to Say I've Missed you Terribly And I Mean that I've really Missed seeing You here in Church And I would Like to See you Every time That you're Able to Come and Bring your Parents as Well Encourage them To come So that You'll all Come together And but It's good to See you Come back To to The Sunday School And today I think You're going To be Hearing a Lesson About Peter In particular And Peter Is an Amazing Character We always Like to Talk about Peter Because of How we

[14 : 58] Think that He's so Like ourselves Not because Of how good We are But How we Follow The The Footsteps That he Took out Of the Path of Obedience When he Did wrong Things We're good At doing Wrong Things Rather than Good at Doing good Things But we're Told about Peter And his Life is An amazing Story How he At one Time Turned his Back on Jesus And denied Him And yet Jesus brought Him back To himself And taught Him What it Was to Be a True follower Of Jesus And he Gave courage To Peter He gave Him remarkable Courage to Speak about Jesus to Others God's Even though For a Time He was Afraid To even Say that He That he Loved The Lord There was A time When he Would have Boldly

Said it That he Loved The Lord Much And he Would have He would Have been So angry If anybody Had said To him That he Didn't Love the Lord But when He Did something Wrong Then he Had a Real Difficulty Because he Was afraid That because Of what he Had done That the Lord Didn't Love him Which of Course was Not right But he Was given Strength He was Given Power By God And When you Listen to What he Said And what He said And where He said It's amazing How powerful His message Was And we're Told in The book Of Acts How he Went out One day With his Brother Apostles And he Was going To the Temple And he Met a Person Who had Been Put

Lying Beside The Temple The reason He was Put there Because he Couldn't Get there Himself He was Lame His legs Had been Unable to Work From the Time he Was born So he Couldn't Walk So they Carried him There And the Reason they Carried him There Was That he Was going To To Seek Charity From those Who were Passing by He was Begging For Money Because Without It He Wouldn't Be Able To Eat He Wouldn't Be Able To Survive So when Peter was Passing by He looked At this Passion And he Said these Very memorable Words Silver And gold Have I None But such As I Have Give I The In the Name Of Jesus Of Nazareth Jesus Christ Of Nazareth Rise Up And walk And this Person Was begging For pennies

In order To help Him To live But Peter Gave him Something Better Than pennies And what Could be Better than Pennies Not just That he was Able to walk Which was Very important But that he Was able To walk With a New Faith A new Life In Jesus Christ Sometimes We think We know What God Must do For us In order For our Lives to be Better And in Many respects We think That if we Have pennies We have It all And I Assure If somebody Gave me A few Pennies I knew Where to Take them There was A shop In the Village And if I had Pennies I would Go to Boonish And Yulish

And get A toffee Bow If you Don't know What a Toffee Bow Is You ask Your Granny They'll Know Anyway And I Would Spend My Pennies On This Toffee Which Was So Sweet And So Tasty It Was Bad For My Teeth But That Didn't Matter And Unfortunately It Didn't Last Very Long It Was Quickly Eaten And the Taste Of It Was Soon Well It Wasn't Forgotten Because I And So I And But That's The Things Are With The Things That We Think That Matter We Want It And We Get It But Soon It Which

[20 : 18] Which Allowed To Tell Others About The Jesus That He I Hope You Discover Something Of That Even Today We're Going To Sing As You Go To Sunday School From Psalm 21 Psalm 21 And We're Going To Sing From Verse 7 Through To The End Of The Psalm Because The King Upon The Lord His Confidence Doth Lay And Through The Grace Of The Most High Shall Not Be Moved Away Thine Hand Shall All Those Men Find Out That Enemies Are To The Even Thy Right Hand Shall Find Out Those Of The That Hat Be The Fiery Oven Thou Shalt Them Make When Kindle This Thine Eyre God Shall Them Swallow In His Wrath Devour Them Shall The Fire And So On To The End Of The Sand Because

The King Upon The Lord His Confidence Doth Lay!' Because Look at The King Of The Lord His Gyros ■■■■■■■■■■■■ The highest Ed blood Thank you And through the crystal of the most high Shall not be moved away Thine man shall not lose man's life Thine man shall not lose

In thy right hand shall find the Lord Only God it ever seems Like thy ring of an old jazzy When kinder dims thy name God shall and swallow in his wrath In our death shall the fire

The truth from her death shall destroy The sick man from the moon For they beyond their fire can see With blood mischief and wrong Thou therefore shalt make them turn back When thou light shall shall place Upon thy strings be ready all

To fly against their knees In thy grip, power and strength O Lord Be the works of the time So shall we sing with your own hearts Thy power and strength We're going to hear God's word As we have it in the New Testament scripture In the book of the Revelation And we're reading chapter 14 The book of Revelation

[25 : 35] And we're reading chapter 14 Let's read the whole chapter Let's read the whole chapter And I looked and lo a lamb stood on the Mount Zion And with him an hundred forty and four thousand Having his father's name written in their foreheads And I heard a voice from heaven As the voice of many waters And as the voice of a great thunder And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps And they sang as it were a new song before the throne And before the four beasts and the elders And no man could learn that song But the hundred and forty and four thousand Which were redeemed from the earth These are they which were not defiled with women But they are virgins These are they which follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth

These were redeemed from among men Being the firstfruits unto God and to the lamb And in their mouth was found no guile For they are without fault before the throne of God And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven Having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them That dwell on the earth And to every nation and kindred and tongue and people Saying with a loud voice Fear God and give glory to him For the hour of his judgment is come And worship him that made heaven and earth And the sea and the fountains of waters And there followed another angel saying Babylon is fallen is fallen That great city Because she made all nations drink of the wine Of the wrath of her fornication And the third angel followed them Saying with a loud voice If any man worship the beast and his image

And receive his mark in his forehead Or in his hand The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God Which is poured out without mixture Into the cup of his indignation And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone In the presence of the holy angels And in the presence of the lamb And the smoke of their torment Ascendeth up forever and ever And they have no rest Day or night Who worship the beast and his image And whosoever receiveth the mark of his name Here is the patience of the saints Here are they that keep the commandments of God And the faith of Jesus And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me Write Blessed are the dead Which die in the Lord from henceforth Yea, saith the Spirit That they may rest from their labours And their works to follow them And I looked

And behold a white cloud And upon the cloud One sat like unto the Son of Man Having on his head a golden crown And in his hand a sharp sigil And another angel came out of the temple And crying with a loud voice to him That sat on the cloud Thrust in thy sigil and reap For the time is come for thee to reap For the harvest of the earth is ripe And he that sat on the cloud Thrust in a sigil on the earth And the earth was reaped And another angel came out of the temple Which is in heaven He also humming a sharp sigil And another angel came out of the altar Which had power over fire And cried with a loud cry To him that had the sharp sigil saying Thrust in thy sharp sigil And gather the clusters of the vine of the earth For her grapes are fully ripe

And the angel thrust in his sigil into the earth And gathered the vine of the earth And cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God And the winepress was trodden without the city And blood came out of the winepress Even into the harsh bridles By the space of a thousand and six hundred furloughs Amen And may the Lord add his blessing To this reading of his word And to his name be the praise We can sing now verses from Psalm 37 From verse 34 to the end of the psalm Psalm 37 verse 34 Wait on the Lord And keep his way And thee exalt shall he The earth to inherit When cut off the wicked thou shalt see

[30 : 42] I saw the wicked great in power Spread like a green bay tree He passed He was not Him I sought But found He could not be Mark thou the perfect And behold The man of uprightness Because that Surely of this man The latter End is peace And so on To the end Of the psalm Psalm 37 From verse 34 To the end Wait on the Lord And keep his way And thee Exalt shall he Wait on the Lord Lord And keep his way And thee Exalt shall he The earth to inherit When cut off the wicked

Thou shalt see I saw the wicked Grit in power Spread like a green bay tree He passed He was not He was not Potent My sword But what He could not be Mark thou the perfect And behold The man of our brightness Because the journey of this man, the love that ends his.

But those men that transgressed shall be destroyed together.

The latter end of wicked men, the wicked of all of them.

But the salvation of the just is from the Lord above.

[33 : 45] In the time of their distresses, they unstream the bloom.

The Lord shall help and them deliver. He shall them free and save.

From wicked men, because the land of the Lord.

The Lord shall be destroyed together. The Lord shall be destroyed. Bishop, for a short time, turn to the passage that we read from the book of Revelation, chapter 14.

And we'll read that. Verse 12. Revelation, chapter 14, at verse 12. Here is the patience of the saints.

[34 : 59] Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.

Yea, save the spirit that they may rest from their labors and their works to follow them. Particularly the words that we have in verse 13.

I'm sure you would agree that the apostle John has been given a unique opportunity. On the Lord's day, on the island of Patmos, he tells us how he was in the spirit.

And he heard things and saw things which no ordinary mortal would see.

He was able to see. He was able to see into heaven itself. He was able to look at things which people would not normally be able to see.

[36 : 20] If you remember at the outset of this epistle of this book, Revelation, chapter 4.

Just to give you. John refers to this access that he was given in different ways at different times. After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven.

And the first voice which I heard was as it were a trumpet talking with me, which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

And immediately I was in the spirit. And behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone.

And there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight, like unto an emerald, and so on. This gives you a taste of the things that John saw.

[37 : 24] And he describes as best he can, because what he sees and what he hears defines description.

And in that sense, I suppose, when we look at the whole of this book of Revelation, we very quickly understand that there are many types and symbols and metaphors there.

And because of the nature of the writing, which is described as apocalyptic, belonging to the revelation of God, which is otherworldly, which takes us into a world which we are not familiar with, that there is much of what John says that we can't immediately understand.

And even those who have studied the scripture for many, many years, they may change their opinion as to what these words of John actually mean.

And that makes it harder, I suppose, to understand or to explain. But there are common themes that run through this book.

[38 : 47] And although the language may require us to handle what we read sensitively and with caution, we are constantly being reminded of the fact that there is something beyond this world.

Beyond the experiences of this world. There is eternity. There is life beyond this world.

And sometimes that description that is given to us refers to a world beyond this one, which is described as heaven, and a world beyond this one, which is described as hell.

We have different places in the Bible that speak of hell as a place prepared for the devil and his angels. Heaven is described as a place that God's people will go to.

Where God himself is enthroned, where his son sits on the throne, and where the people of God, surrounded by the angels of God, reside.

[40 : 02] All of that is brought to our attention in this book. And whether we understand it all, whether we are able to insist on precise meanings, and we can't do that.

Such is the nature of the language that is used. And even going back through the centuries, you'll find people who insist that they know what these words mean.

That these are symbolic, that they are analogies, that they are allegories, that they are all kinds of linguistic devices to present truth to us.

And when that is acknowledged, then the interpretation of what they mean becomes the question. And yet you hear countless, or read of countless, genuine, believing people arriving at different conclusions about the exact, precise nature of the meaning.

It contains prophecy, for example. And the prophetic declarations that are in the word have often been seen to mean precisely this or that.

[41 : 29] Some parts of it have been descriptive, we are told, of the rise of the Babylonian Empire, or the rise of the Roman Empire, or the rise of the Third Reich, or the world spread of the Muslim faith.

Some of it have been said, the power of Roman Catholicism, and the influence on the church, and so on.

Now, the problem with being too specific about these things is that if you insist on one particular interpretation, then that interpretation, you have to consistently apply it and insist that the meaning of it is of a particular sort.

Now, there are truths that we can understand to have one specific meaning because there is a consistent application of that meaning throughout the book and taken from elsewhere within the scripture.

But there are other things, like some of the things that are described to us in this chapter, that we have to handle cautiously.

[42 : 53] But we know that it speaks of something that is contained within the scripture, throughout the scripture, and that is that God has declared and revealed that there is a heaven and an earth, that there is an earth and a hell, that both the world in which we live has these two spheres beyond it.

Where it is, we cannot see, we cannot see. John was given this privilege of looking into heaven. And he was also having, by the Spirit, words put into the mouth, describing to us the torments of hell.

Now, he didn't have to go to hell in order to see that. He didn't have to go to heaven in order to see what is in heaven. But he was allowed permission, as it were, to glance into it and prosper that glance.

So before we look even at this passage, can I ask a question? What would you, whoever you are, I don't know who you are, I don't know what you believe.

Some of you are, I know, practicing Christians. You're members in the congregation here. And you have certain fixed understandings of what the scripture says.

[44 : 19] What would you most like to do? Would you like to be like John, given this privilege of looking into heaven? Would that be something that would be an encouragement to your faith?

Or would it perhaps be the case that you would say, well, if I would be able to see, from safety, of course, into hell.

If I was able to, with God's help and with God's like, gaze into hell and see the sufferings there, perhaps it would stimulate my faith in Jesus Christ.

Perhaps it would compel me to speak to others about Christ, because my fear is that there are too many that are going into a lost eternity, into that hell.

And if I'm convinced of it, if I'm persuaded of it, if I am given this access to it, even from afar, then I would truly be the evangelist I would want to be.

[45 : 28] If you're a believer, maybe that's thoughts that you've never really, you want to distance your mind away from hell altogether.

But you're not all that different from those who are unbelievers. Hell is not something they want to consider. I've often said that very often you hear about a person dying, and nobody questions that person's faith or reality of it.

I don't think it was ever considered as they lived their life here in this world. But they're always looking down. Many of them are looking down on this world. And from their vantage point in heaven, however they got there, they're standing there with their pint, and they're waiting for others to come and join them.

Because that's their idea of what heaven is like. Now where that notion came from, nobody, I don't know where it came from. But I do believe that they have some idea that there is a heaven somewhere.

But strangely enough, you would never hear somebody saying, they're looking up from hell, and they're enjoying their pint, and they're waiting for their friends to join them there.

[46 : 51] But such a thought is so awful to contemplate, and it's never presented as a possibility.

Well, the Bible teaches us that there are these two outcomes at the end of our lives. And I want us to look at this version in particular, and consider four things from the version.

First of all, there's the blessed dead. There is the spirit's affirmation. Thirdly, there is the believer's rest.

And fourthly, there is the believer's works. Four things, and we'll just touch on each one of them. The blessed dead.

We are told that he was instructed to write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.

[48 : 00] Now we seldom consider death to be blessed, if we were honest. We don't consider death to be blessed.

Because death itself is something, by its very nature, it goes against the grain. God created us, in his own image, body and soul.

And life, given by God, existed within that whole person, body and soul. And when the curse of God came upon that person because of sin, it instantly brought separation between body and soul.

Instantly, I say, because the power of death began to manifest itself in the experience of the creature that was made in God's image.

He didn't die physically instantly, but he began to die. He no longer existed in God's presence with the ability to coexist with God in his presence in harmony.

[49 : 12] Because death was now intruding into that experience. It was instant spiritual death, and it would eventually be with the prospect of eternal death.

But we don't think of it, is what I want to say. We don't think of death. Even Christians, for the most part, if you ask a Christian, are you ready to die?

And if they're earnest, and if they're honest, and they believe this, that when the believer dies, they are going to be with the Lord, which is far better, intellectually, spiritually, their faith clings on to this hope that this is what is going to be true of them.

When they die, they are going to be with Christ. But we're not in a rush to get there. We're not in a hurry to get there.

And why is that? Well, one reason is that we're so bound up with this world in which we live, that we can't.

[50 : 29] We can't break these bonds that tie us to the world, the ties that bind us to the fixtures and fittings that we are so used to, the environment that we move in, the loved ones that we share our life with.

We are so bound up with them, it is painful for us to consider being separated from them by death. But the time will come for the believer when these ties will be broken.

And the longings and the leanings that they have towards this world will change. And their fixation will be not with this world, or what's in this world, but what is in the next.

And it's God that does that. That's not a natural experience. It is a spiritual experience brought about by God as he works in the hearts and the minds and the souls of the believer.

There's no doubt that the experience can be ours where we want away from this world. If we have trouble in it, if we have pain in it, if we have things we want to escape from, then we say, I want, I want heaven.

[51 : 53] But what the apostle is saying here is that blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.

There is the qualification. Death is not something that anyone would choose to embrace except they are in the Lord, except they have this relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, except they have put their faith and trust in one who has promised.

Promised. His promises are fixed. They will not be deviated from. Promised to take his people to be with himself where no one can take them away from him.

And it is those who die in the Lord that these promises will be true for. Those who have been united by faith will not be parted from him even in death.

They are ushered into his presence instantly. I'm going to quote to you the words of the Westminster Confession of Faith. I'll quote it because what it says, it says it better than I ever could.

[53 : 12] The bodies of men after death return to dust and see corruption. But their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them.

The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies.

The bodies rest in the grave. The body sleeps in the grave. But the soul returns to God and the soul does not sleep.

The soul is active, actively enjoying the company of the saints, actively enjoying the presence of the angels, actively enjoying the worship of a God that they gave their heart and soul to.

They were never as active in their life as they are now in glory. But not all die in the Lord.

[54 : 23] Everyone will die, but not everyone will have the same death. The godly saintly Robert Murray MacJane had much to say.

And considering his short lifespan, it is no surprise that he was concerned to bring the truth of the gospel to bear on lives that he saw were hastening towards eternity as he was himself.

This is what he said. Just a taste of it. The Christless dead rushes into an undone eternity, unpardoned and unholy.

Whatever the trappings of the funeral of the Christless, it is still the funeral of a damned soul. You cannot write blessed where God has risen, written, cursed, he that believeth not, shall be damned.

These are solemn, solemn words. You cannot write blessed where God has written, cursed. And this is what the scripture holds out to us.

[55 : 49] And these words that we have here is a reminder to us of how God himself insists, however much he chooses to reveal his glory through the mystical revelation that we have here, through the mystery of the apocalyptic writings of the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New.

There are truths that don't change. And here, what we read is, I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write. God himself is saying, write.

He is saying, take note of this. Write this down so that people will read it and that they will know for themselves this is what is true. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth.

And then he says, yea, saith the Spirit. It's as if the Holy Spirit of God is saying amen to what God the Father is saying in heaven.

He is insisting that what is written and what is said is meant to be discovered and to be held as truth. The voice said, write.

[57 : 11] And the Spirit said, yea. Now you can choose what to believe. You can choose who to believe.

That choice is always yours. But if who you believe and what you believe contradicts what God has written and what God has by his Spirit said, that contradiction will always end in disaster for you.

It will always end badly. There are solemn words written even at the end of this book. Remember what he says about the Scripture.

He insists on the Scripture being believed. He insists on the Scripture not being added to. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book.

If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away as part out of the book of life and out of the holy city and from the things which are written in this book.

[58 : 31] He which testifies these things says, surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

you may choose what to believe, you may choose who to believe, but if your choice is not to believe what God has said and what God by his Spirit has revealed to us, then that choice takes you into a contradiction of the God of heaven himself.

There are many people who put words into God's mouth. There are many people who choose to silence the voice of God, but God will not go back on his own word.

He will not recant, he will not repent because his word is true and his word is truth. The third thing we have, the believer's rest.

rest. And for many people, when we think of rest in heaven, some people, as I said earlier, some people have an idea or an ocean of heaven as if it's just a glorified holiday camp.

[59 : 54] They're there reclining on their sunbeds and they're having a gay old time and that's all heaven means to them, a never-ending vacation.

And even that thought itself, when they think of what their understanding of a never-ending vacation is, becomes a bitterness in their mouth because the understanding that the believer has of heaven is an ongoing reality of experiences that will increase as they go on discovering the glory of God as he is in Christ Jesus, delving into the mysteries that were mystery to them in this world, discovering truth because they have this incapacity by nature because they are human, they are created, and they are delving into truth concerning the uncreated one.

They are exploring the truths that they marvelled at in their own experience of coming to salvation through Christ Jesus, the things that God kept hidden from them, the things that God revealed to them that were so important in their development as Christians.

All of these things will be things that they delight in spending company with Christ and his people discussing or talking. he will lead them to fountains of living water.

But remember this verse is also a contrast. He says in verse 13, I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.

- [61 : 42] Yes, it is the spirit that they may rest from their labors. But if you go back to verse 10, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and the presence of the lamb, and the smoke of their torment ascended up forever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night to worship the beast and his image, and to so ever receive the mark of his name.

There is the contrast made between the rest of the believer and the rest that is no rest, that the wicked will experience in the dark regions of a lost eternity.

There is no rest for the wicked. Secondly, it is rest from their labors, we are told. I think this passage has a historical context because the apostle is writing to encourage believers who have to encounter and endure the persecution that their faith has brought into their experience.

There were times in the experience of the church when they were confronted by a Roman emperor who insisted that they worship him and as Christians, as believers, they could not even begin to countenance that.

And if they refused to worship the emperor, their fate was sealed. They were martyred. They were sawn asunder. They were pierced with swords.

- [63 : 30] They were thrown into the fire. their witness, their testimony was tried like that.

Some endured slavery or imprisonment or whatever. And that is always in the world, to some degree, ridicule, being made up, made to show that your faith is irrelevant, that your Lord is irrelevant, that your faith is irrelevant.

because of what you must believe if you believe God and His Word. And it's alright to be ridiculed for what you believe, as long as you don't disagree with what others believe, or they believe what they like.

But what we read here is that this was the promise that was given. This will be a temporary experience.

The restlessness of this world will be a temporary experience. In its place there will always be the prospect of a rest from these very things.

- [64 : 52] It's always important to remember how the Scripture repeatedly reminds the people of God the very things that they need to be reminded of because of the nature of the sufferings that they have to endure in this world.

You have images such as the sailor who is in a storm and what is promised is a safe haven. You have the image of the wilderness dweller that is walking the rocky thorny paths of the road and what is promised is a home.

You have the image of the farmer who is breaking his back ploughing the fields and planting his seed. There is always the prospect of the harvest.

Always the promise that God gives us these things must be gone through because better awaits. and the rest that is spoken of here they may rest from their labours.

I think we have to guard against thinking that it is a reclining Christian that you have here. It's the rest of the things that were laborious.

- [66 : 16] It's interesting if you read Paul's epistle to the Corinthians the second epistle and he has a passage there where he lists so many things that he endured as a believer.

You know he was imprisoned, he was whipped, he was all kinds of sufferings that were in his life and yet he mentions this in labor often.

That word there just seems so out of place compared to the other things that seem so extreme, the things that were part and partial of his experience. Labor doesn't seem to be anything but trivial in comparison to them, but I think it identifies to us the very nature of the labor that is spoken of here.

It is associated with the confession of their faith, it is associated with the life that they must live in this world that is openly hostile to the Christ that they serve.

And that is what is brought to our attention. These labors, they will rest from them. And finally, their works will follow them.

[67 : 44] The Bible often speaks to us about what is done by faith as a labor, and it is not easy in that respect.

Sometimes we fear our own labor will embarrass us because they're so trivial in comparison with the work of others.

but to the church in Laodicea, it's mentioned here in chapter 3, I think, of this book. It speaks of the labor of the church there, but it condemns them for it because it was lukewarm.

what they were doing was a labor, but it was neither warm, it was neither hot or cold, and it was something that God said to them, Christ said to them, it makes me want to spew, spew it out of my mouth.

It's tepid, tasteless, and not respected. It's meant to be. It's meant to be something that it's not. But the labor that God takes note of is the labor of faith.

[69 : 06] The labor that is the result of your complete and total trust in Jesus Christ, which is what is commended, and which is what is commanded.

it. Charles Hodge, the American theologian, I'll finish with this quotation, the reward secured for the Christian's labor, which he says is by the grace of God and the merit of Christ, his participation of his glories and the blessedness of his resurrection.

In other words, what the apostle here is doing, he's not saying to you, work hard and you'll get to heaven. Make sure your work is of the right sort and you'll be in there.

That's not what he's saying. But your labor is the labor of faith, what you can't, can't not but do. And if it is there, you will receive your reward, reward, God's eye is upon his own people.

And all that is ours by virtue of our relationship with him will be noticed and accounted for in the day when we will answer to him.

[70 : 28] Always remember that there is a heaven and that there is a hell. Always remember that when we die we are going to meet our maker and that he has promised nothing less than the fulfillment of his promise.

And his promise is those who believe will go to eternal everlasting life. And those who don't, they will be condemned to everlasting destruction.

The Bible doesn't describe any third way. and you know today already what your destination is.

In your heart of hearts, that's what your face is set on. And if your face is set on destruction, may God in his mercy persuade you otherwise. let us pray.

O Lord, O God, we pray for your mercy, for your grace, for your own word to impact upon our hearts, that we may believe to the saving of our souls.

[71 : 40] Be near to all those who are struggling with their faith, encourage them in it, that they may look to Christ, the alone saviour of sinners. May all who have yet to look to him, be reminded of the need that they have to take the word of God to heart.

Here is in his name. Amen. Our closing psalm is psalm 17, and we're singing from verse 13 to the end.

Psalm 17, at verse 13, Arise and disappoint my foe, and cast him down, O Lord, my soul save from the wicked man, the man that is thy sword, from men which are thy hand, O Lord, from worldly men me save, which only in this present life their part and portion have, whose belly with thy treasure head thou fills, the children having plenty, of their goods the rest they to their children leave.

But as for me, I thine own face in righteousness will see, and with thy likeness when I wake, thy satisfied shall be.

These verses arise and disappoint my foe, and cast him down, O Lord. during koreya, ■■■ or placing him down, O Lord, my soul shall prove to him the wicked man that man wages thy sword.

[73 : 46] From many years I've lost the Lord, from a world being in every day, with your name in this blessed life, that walk on a portion of, whose daily will I get to face, the village is enduring harm, in a planting of men with the rest, if you let it be, and the name.

But as for me I thine own face, in a righteous lesson will sing, and when I die again, when I wait, I start this night of me.

So may I ask, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit rest, and abide with you all, now and always. Amen.