

The hope of heaven

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Preacher: Philip Wells

[0:00] Well, good morning. Welcome to this pre-recorded meeting for Calvary Evangelical Church in Brighton.

! We're a church who live in the area of Brighton in Sussex in the UK who believe in Jesus Christ.! We're a church of 80 or so of us meeting together on Sunday mornings in normal times. We're just ordinary people from different nations and different backgrounds. But we believe that God has brought us together to serve Him and to love Him. And we'll do our best to express that in this time together this morning.

We believe that truth and meaning, the meaning for life is found in Jesus. And He is to be found through and only through God's revelation of Himself in the Bible, which is God Himself speaking to humankind.

Through Jesus Christ, we find forgiveness of our sins. We believe that when we listen to God with an open mind and seeking spirit, no one will go away disappointed.

[1:05] And we certainly pray that this proves to be your experience today. So, a particular welcome to you if you've just dropped in. Maybe looking for some spiritual guidance and comfort at this time.

In the first 10 minutes or so, I'll try to keep things very user-friendly for everyone. And as we go on, I'll be thinking more of the regular attenders. But don't think you have to tune out.

Well, my name is Philip Wells. I'm one of a team of elders here at Calvary and I'll be leading this morning. There are some other notices behind me on the screen, as you will have seen.

And there is also a plan which is behind me on the screen also.

And even in these strange times, we're going to do the things that all Christians normally do when they meet together to sing and pray and read the Bible and think carefully about what the Bible says to us and how it applies to us.

[2:07] This talk is a part of a series of four talks based on the book of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 65 and 66 in the Old Testament. And you'll find it really helpful to see the words for yourself.

So, please grab a copy off your shelf if you've got a copy of the Bible on your shelf or you could download it as part of the Bible app. Let's begin by praying.

Lord, we come together today and we ask that you will reveal yourself to each one of us. Show us meaning and truth and forgiveness and hope for Jesus' sake. Amen.

I'm going to begin by reading two parts of the Bible that express the solid hope and comfort that God offers. And the first is in Genesis 1, verses 1 to 3.

Genesis being the first book of the Bible, as I'm sure you know. It says this. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

[3:10] Now the earth was formless and empty. Darkness was over the surface of the deep. The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, Let there be light. And there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And he separated the light from the darkness.

God called the light the light day. And the darkness he called night. And there was evening. And there was morning. The first day.

What grand and majestic statements the Bible makes. In this we learn that the things that we see around us were made by God.

He made them single-handedly. And he made them from nothing. He took what was formless and gave it form. He took what was empty and filled it with all sorts of wonderful things.

[4:15] He did this through the method of speaking. God said, Let there be light. And God sees what he has made and assesses it.

He saw that it was good. For the last three months we've been living in lockdown since the coronavirus. And we've suffered this peculiar distancing.

Distancing from normal routines. Distancing from simple pleasures. Distancing from normal activities. And in particular distancing from people.

And perhaps God is teaching us what it feels like to be distant. After all, by and large, our society has been, whether by indifference or by deliberate decision, distant from God.

Of course, this Bible describes this distancing in Genesis, where Adam and Eve deliberately flout God's lockdown rules by eating the fruit of the one tree that they were told not to eat.

[5:23] They disobey the rules. And the rest, of course, the way that we were kicked out of the garden, distanced, is history. But we're reminded that God is not far away.

Far from it. One thing that we have that reminds us of this is the beautiful weather. The increased presence of what we call nature. Bird song. Insect life.

Flowers. Beautiful blue skies. So the song we're going to sing or have sung to us is, I think you would call it a traditional Christian song. All things bright and beautiful.

The Lord God made them all. The Lord God made them all. The Lord God made them all. All things bright and beautiful. All things bright and beautiful.

All creatures great and small. All things wise and wonderful. All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small.

[6:30] All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them whole. Each little flower that opened, each little bird that sings.

He made their glowing colors, He made their tiny wings.

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small. All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them whole.

Of the poor headed mountain, the river running by. The sunset and the morning that brightens up the sky.

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small. All things bright and beautiful, the Lord God made them whole.

[7:52] The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun. The white fruits in the garden, He made them every one.

The light of the night, the light of the night. All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small. All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them whole.

He gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell. How great is God Almighty, who has made all things well.

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small. All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them whole.

All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them whole. And now we're going to have a prayer said to thank God, our Creator.

[9:14] How many are your works, O Lord, in wisdom you made them all. The earth is full of your creatures. Lord, we thank you for the beauties of creation we can see in these days of spring.

We thank you for the lovely sunshine and the wonderful weather that you've given us of late. And we see the glories of your creation.

We thank you that we can go to beauty spots such as Woods Mill, the Dyke, Ditchling Beacon. We can go to the seaside and experience your creation.

We thank you for giving us lush vegetation to greenery for the blue seas, for rivers, for life, for animals, for quails, for birds, colossal creatures like cows and elephants that you've given us.

And we thank you that we can see these things and praise you that in themselves, Lord, if we look at them, they're beautiful.

[10:34] We thank you that we have the added dimension of knowing that you've given them for us for our enjoyment and our pleasure. And we want to give you praise as creator and sustainer.

Thank you, Lord, that you've given them for us for our sake of love. Thank you, Lord, that you made them and you've blessed us with them, Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen. Christian faith is about getting back into the garden, removing the distance between God and us.

And it teaches us that a way was made through one man who did not flout the regulations, but kept them to his own cost. And this person, I'm referring to Jesus, of course.

He had his own business with a tree, but in his case, the tree was not used to feed him, but to crucify him. By his act of obedience, his great, selfless, courageous act of obedience, we get back into the garden.

And there is a new heaven and earth without sin and death and distance. Let me read you from the last book of the Bible, Revelation, in almost the last chapter, chapter 21.

[11:54] It says, And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Now the dwelling of God is with men, and they will live with him.

They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, nor mourning, nor crying, nor pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

He who was seated on the throne said, I am making everything new. This new heaven and new earth is the hope of every Christian, and answers to the heart longing of every human being.

So may I invite you to carry on listening, to find out how you can engage with this person, Jesus, to make these things real for you.

We're going to sing a song which is often sung at Christmas, actually, but it's really a song about the way Jesus Christ brings us back into the garden and makes a new heaven and a new earth full of joy.

[13:28] Joy to the world, her Lord is come. Joy to the world, the Lord has come.

Let earth receive a king. Let every heart prepare him room.

Joy to the world, the Lord has come. And heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior raised, Your sweetest songs employ, While fields and streams and hills and plains, Repeat the sounding joy.

Repeat the sounding joy. Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

[15:01] No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thoughts infest the ground.

He comes to make his blessings flow, Where Eden's curse is found, Where Eden's curse is found, He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove, The glories of his righteousness, The wonders of his love, The wonders of his love, The wonders, wonders of his love.

Our services put a very heavy emphasis on the Bible, and rightly so. Every Sunday we spend time listening to God, And by listening to him, By listening what was written for us in the Bible.

We call it the word of God, Because that's what it is. It's God speaking to us. And Christopher has recorded the reading of Isaiah 65. He recorded it last week, But we're going to listen to it again this week, Because we're going to look at the second half of this chapter.

Isaiah 65 I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me. I was found by those who did not seek me.

[17:03] To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, Here am I, here am I. All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, Who walk in ways not good, Pursuing their own imaginations.

A people who continually provoke me to my very face, Offering sacrifices in gardens, And burning incense and altars of brick, Who sit among the graves, And spend their nights keeping secret vigil, Who eat the flesh of pigs, And whose pots hold broth of unclean meat, Who say, Keep away, don't come near me, For I am too sacred for you.

Such people are smoking my nostrils, A fire that keeps burning all day. See, it stands written before me, I will not keep silent, But will pay back in full.

I will pay it back into their laps, Both your sins and the sins of your fathers, Says the Lord. Because they burnt sacrifices on the mountains, And they defied me on the hills, I will measure into their laps the full payment for their former deeds.

This is what the Lord says, As when juice is still found in a cluster of grapes, And men say, Don't destroy it, There is yet some good in it. So will I do on behalf of my servants.

[18:18] I will not destroy them all. I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, And from Judah, Those who will possess my mountains. My chosen people will inherit them, And there will my servants live.

Sharon will become a pasture for flocks, And the valley of Acre a resting place for herds, For my people who seek me. But as for you, Who forsake the Lord, And forget my holy mountain, Who spread a table for fortune, And filled bowls of mixed wine for destiny.

I will destiny you for the sword, And you will all bend down for the slaughter. For I called, but you did not answer. I spoke, but you did not listen. You did evil in my sight, And chose what displeases me. Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says, My servants will eat, but you will go hungry. My servants will drink, but you will go thirsty. My servants will rejoice, but you will be put to shame. My servants will sing out of the joy of their hearts, But you will cry out from the anguish of heart, And wail in brokenness of spirit. You will leave your name to my chosen ones as a curse.

[19:30] The Sovereign Lord will put you to death, But to his servants he will give another name. Whoever invokes a blessing in the land, Will do so by the God of truth. He who takes an oath in the land, Will swear by the God of truth.

For past troubles will be forgotten, And hidden from my eyes. Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, Nor will they come to mind.

But be glad and rejoice for ever in what I will create. For I will create Jerusalem to be a delight, And its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem, And take delight in my people.

The sound of weeping and of crying Will be heard in it no more. Never again will there be in it An infant who lives but a few days, Or an old man who does not live out his years.

He who dies at a hundred Will be thought a mere youth. He who fails to reach a hundred Will be considered a curse. They will build houses and dwell in them.

[20:32] They will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, Or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, So will be the days of my people.

My chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain, Or bear children doomed to misfortune. For they will be a people blessed by the Lord, They and their descendants with them.

Before they call, I will answer. While they are still speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, And the lion will each draw like the ox, But dust will be the serpent's food.

They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, Says the Lord. Amen. One of the modern songwriters, Christopher Idle, Has written a song which takes up this theme.

And these words, Those of you using our usual book, It's number 976. I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

[21:41] Now I don't think we've sung this before. So we've recorded it with one complete instrumental verse, Before the singing verses. That will just maybe help us to get the tune.

Don't be embarrassed to rewind and pick up the tune again. But once you've got it, it's a lovely tune. I saw a new heaven and a new earth. Let's go. Let's go.

Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Then I saw a new head, never looked, from the first and foster way.

And the Holy Spirit come back, come back, like a bride on a wedding day. And I knew how He loves His own, for I had a great voice now.

And He is people, and He they call, and the woman He came to dwell.

[23:38] He will wipe away every tear, even death shall not have lost. They will bring the banging of grief or pain, they belong to the great that's lost.

And the woman told said, Look, I am making all things new. He is A and Z, He is first and last, and His words are exact and true.

And the woman told, Oh, the thirsty can be the bill, and the pension-giving light.

And the gates are shut on all evil things, in deceit and keep hope and strife.

With the nations and bones and toes, like a jewel the city finds, with its streets of gold, and its gates of love, in a glory where new one lies.

[25:07] And they measure its length and prayer, like they see no temple there.

For its only temple is Lord the Lord, and the Lord in that city care.

And it is like a sun-lorn moon, in a place which knows her lies.

For the city's love is long itself, and the glory of God is mine.

And I saw by the sacred flow, flowing water, and the stone-lorn moon, and the tree of life, with its healing leaves, and its fruit for each other year.

[26:21] Till the worshippers of the land, where His name can see His face, He will reign and serve, and forever live, in the image of His glorious grace.

Before we spend time listening to what God says, I will say a prayer.

We come and praise and bless and worship and honour you, our Creator God.

You are great and mighty. You made the heavens and the earth. You keep them going, and you will one day bring them to a conclusion, and judge everything, whether it is good or whatever.

One day you will make everything new. We come to confess our sins, how we sin, how awful it is, our ingratitude, our distancing of ourselves from you, our breaking your rules, our incurable tendency to look for meaning and solutions within the world, instead of looking to you who made the world.

[27:52] We ask you to take our lives, and to come and do whatever you want with us. May we be your servants at your disposal.

Help your servants in their weakness and need. Empower your people to live and speak so as to show that you are great.

Have mercy on our world in all its trouble and need. Please give wisdom to our leaders. Give wisdom and humility to our leaders and all world leaders.

Have mercy, we pray, on those who are ill, in hospital, weak and needy, those in care homes, those who might be fearful, and all who suffer.

May it please you to give success to the scientists trying to find a cure for the virus. May they do so in humble dependence on you, rather than arrogantly thinking they can do it without you.

[28:59] Finally, we ask you to help speaker and hearer alike, in attending to your word. We're going to think about hope, and may we truly find hope.

We pray in the name of Jesus. We pray to the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen. So now we're going to change gear, and spend some time thinking carefully together about what God's saying to us in this part of Isaiah 65.

Well, we're going to think about Isaiah 65 and the last half of it that we had read to us. And we pray again, Lord, help speaker and hearer alike.

Help us to hear your word. Amen. Well, my introduction is that whoever you are, whether you're somebody of faith or of no faith, God has made us all creatures of meaning and purpose.

Whereas the theory of evolution is based on the idea of survival, survival of the fittest. Actually, human beings are deeply dissatisfied with merely surviving.

[30:22] And I know it's a sad thing to consider, but under tragic and extreme circumstances, we can see that loss and meaninglessness and pain, people would rather end their lives than just survive.

So we do, we seek meaning and purpose in all sorts of things. In pleasure, in sex, in possessions, perhaps even in good things.

Altruistic, it seems like serving others, religion, relationships. But none of these things goes deep enough.

None of these people is sufficient to give a meaning and purpose to our human lives. And this longing for hope, I'm using that word now, stretches beyond the confines of this life and this earth. In Ecclesiastes in the Bible, it says, he has set eternity in the hearts of men. And the genius thing about Christianity, of all the religions and all the philosophies and all the isms, is that it gives us clear and strong answer to this business of life beyond the grave and life in a renewed universe, ultimate eternal life.

[31:43] And I'd like to put it to you that only with such a perspective is it really possible to live as a human being on earth.

And only with this perspective is it possible to live the Christian life, certainly. The Christian life can indeed involve running at a loss in this life, perhaps giving up one's life as a martyr or making many sacrifices.

But this only makes sense if there is a firm expectation that this is more than compensated for in the new world, which, of course, is exactly what the Bible says. Now, as I'm speaking about hope, please don't think I'm referring to the flimsy, wishful thinking of hope, like hoping to win the lottery or something like that.

But hope in the sense I'm using it is a clear and well-founded expectation or anticipation, a promise from someone that you can trust about the future.

So we're looking at Isaiah 65 and let's put it in a context in the Bible. In the big picture, God made the world and he made it good.

[32:54] And he gave human beings a particular place in this world to be rulers under him. So sort of kings and queens in this world ruling creation, having dominion over it.

But our first parents spoil this. Humans spoil the harmony and relationship of this by pushing God out of his place as the kind ruler of the world and sort of declaring independence from God.

But God has made a plan to redeem. When I say redeem, I mean buy back from lostness, slavery, to buy back this world through one man as prophesied through the seed, the offspring, the family of Abraham.

And thus, as the Old Testament story shows us, by the service and testimony of the nation of ancient Israel, the chosen people of God.

And their headquarters or God's headquarters being the city of Jerusalem. Israel. But in our text, in our book, the city of Isaiah's day was a servant that had failed and a city that was corrupt.

[34:14] And a city that God said after many, many centuries of patience, he said, this is doomed for destruction. And of course, we have the historical event of the Babylonian invasion. And thus, Isaiah presents to us, really through this case study, the sinful failure of all humankind.

This moral and spiritual failure is actually true of all of us, not just in history and not just in one particular nation.

Isaiah presents us with that failure, but also presents us with the absolute determination of God to fulfill his plan of redemption. So what about the book we've been reading, the context in Isaiah itself?

Well, as we've said before, these chapters could well have been written with the Babylonian exiles as the target audience. Maybe while they're in Babylon, thinking about the future or maybe having returned from Babylon again, thinking about the future.

As we've said before, these chapters emphasize the desperate situation of sin and the desperate need of sinners. Put it in those moral categories.

[35:31] And these chapters emphasize the extreme nature of God's grace. And when I say grace, I mean God acting out of sheer one sided kindness and sometimes acting with extreme power and determination.

And these chapters also reach the high point of declaring the fullness of God's purposes, as we see before us. So the fullness is not a higher law, something to try harder to get or a false hope of humans bettering themselves if they only turn over a new leaf.

But really, you might say a factory reset for creation itself. My daughter's smartphone has lost Google Play services and various bits of software.

And actually the only answer for that corrupted software is to reset it, set it going all over again. And a new creation, as it were.

In the Bible, I'm not looking at a new phone, but we're looking at a new heaven and a new earth.

[36:45] So what does this chapter say? I'll just point out it speaks in Old Testament language. That's the language that people, its original readers could understand. How else could it speak if you're trying to explain something to somebody?

You have to use language that they can understand. I'm going to pick out four things. God's wonderful new creation. Sorry, that's the first of the four things.

The list of four things is coming up. So number one is the God's wonderful new creation. Behold, I will create a new heavens and a new earth.

The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create. For I will create Jerusalem to be a rejoicing and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem. I will take delight in my people. The sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. So a wonderful new creation.

[37:51] Actually, three times God says, create, create. I will create this as an act of power in this. It's a new heavens and a new earth. So it is new, but it's a new version of the old thing, if you like.

A new heaven and a new earth. God made the heavens and the earth. And now it's a new heaven and a new earth. And in this, old things will not be remembered. That's rather a remarkable thing, isn't it?

The trials and troubles will not be remembered. Rather like when a woman's given birth, she doesn't remember the labour pains. That's all forgotten in the joy of the new creation.

And this new creation is described in terms of joy and delight and rejoicing. And the people rejoice and delight.

But most remarkable of all, one of the most remarkable sentences in the Bible, really. Verse 19. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people.

[38:54] God will look at them and say, they're wonderful. They're delightful. I'm so pleased with these people. I think that's an amazing thing. That God says he will do a work in us such that when he looks upon us with delight and satisfaction.

We're surprised, aren't we? I'm surprised. I'm amazed that God could do that. We're so conscious. We're so conscious. Christian people are conscious of their sin.

We fight a constant battle against sin. We have indwelling sin. And every day we have to come to God in confession. But God says there will be a day when that won't be the case anymore.

He will look at us and say, no, wonderful, delightful, all good. That was number one. Number two, the removal of the sting and pain of death itself.

Now, this is put to us in two rather poignant examples in terms of infant mortality and senility. I hope I'm using the right word for the decline of old age.

[40:00] So never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days or an old man who does not live out his years. He who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth.

He who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. Or it might be saying something like if you don't reach a hundred, that would be very strange and unusual.

So those two situations to us of old age and infant death, they're very painful situations. They are part of life here, aren't they? Sadly, I don't want to minimize the pain of either losing someone too early or losing someone at the end of their life.

But the promise here is that will no longer be the case. It refers back to chapter 25 where he says, On this mountain, he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations.

He will swallow up death forever. The sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces. He will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth.

[41:14] The Lord has spoken. What a totally remarkable program for God to promise he will do, to take away death.

It shows us something that we perhaps long suspected, that death is not intrinsic to being human. It's not meant to be part of our experience.

If you've wept at the graveside, you will know this. It's not meant to be part of our experience. Death is an invader. Death is a trespasser. Death is an enemy.

Death is, of course, where Adam's sin took him. He sort of emigrated to the dark land of death. And all his children have been there since. There is no actual solution to this life's problems without a solution to the problem of death.

And God says, that is a problem I will solve. The Lord is almighty and he can solve this. And we might ask, where does this solution come from? And I'm sure Isaiah would have been on his tiptoes, sort of trying to look forward and see where the answer comes from.

[42:23] We can look back and see that. Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life. And of course, he demonstrated that in his own death and resurrection.

And now he lives forevermore. Death can't touch him. He's escaped that. He's dealt with it. He's dealt with it. Now we come to the third point. It's in verse 21.

The whole home.

They build houses and dwell in them. They plant vineyards and eat their fruit. This is this place of home. The longing of the human heart for home is surely an echo of this longing for an eternal home, which God says here he is providing.

In the terms and conditions of the old covenant, the covenant with Moses, the disobedient people were told explicitly that they would find their homes being taken by others. And the crops they had worked for would be eaten by others.

[43:52] How frustrating and vexing. How full of dissatisfaction and frustration. But God says that will no longer be the case. And Jesus himself says, I go to prepare a place for you.

A place, the sort of place that we would like to live in. A place that suits us. A place prepared for us. The Welsh were, the Welsh have a word for longing for home.

I don't try and pronounce it. Is it rare? Well, whatever the word is, that's what Jesus does. He says, I've come to take you home.

Number four. The removal of distance from God. So now I'm thinking of verse 24 where it says, Before they call, I will answer. While they're still speaking, I will hear.

The removal of distance from God. Before they call, I will answer. Not, I think, a promise about prayer in this life. Sometimes people quote it as that, but it is actually for the future, isn't it?

[44:56] But, although we have to say that God often does answer prayers before we've been sensible enough to pray them. And he sometimes answers prayers that we didn't pray at all. Like, give us this day our daily bread.

Well, he gives us our daily bread and we quite often don't pray that prayer, I suspect. But this is, seems to me, a promise about intimate closeness to God. No time delay, rather a negative time delay.

Before they call, I will answer. Such a close communication. Before they call, I will answer. Not like the helpline where you ring up and you get put on hold for 45 minutes.

No sense of God being distant, unanswered prayer. But the very, very opposite of that. Such a closeness. And here we live by faith.

That's what Christian people do. We trust in God who is unseen. Who, like Jesus in the Gospel story, was asleep in the boat in the storm.

[46:03] Sometimes that's our experience. How God seems not close. Although he tells us that he is. But in that world, there will be no absence, either real or perceived.

Before they call, I will answer. How wonderful. And fifthly, a new ecosystem without harm or destruction. The wolf and the lamb will feed together or feed as one.

The Hebrew says, the lion will eat straw like the ox. But dust will be the serpent's food. So the wolf and the lion feed as one.

The lion will eat straw like an ox. Which seems a strange reversal of the conflict that seems to be in our ecosystem currently.

No doubt using present day language to describe something we don't yet see. But there it is. I would say a new ecosystem without harm or destruction. And of course, the serpent's food being dust is a reference to Genesis chapter 3, where the punishment for the serpent was that he would eat dust.

[47:12] And so the humiliation and right shame of all that is evil. And the harmlessness of that which God has made good.

Well, something, an ecosystem with animals. I'm sure that that is a reasonable deduction what's being said, but a non harmful ecosystem.

And the summary sentence there, they will neither harm nor destroy in all my holy mountain. A place where there is not harm and evil. No crying, no tears, no sorrow, no death, no pain.

That's what God says. That's what God promises he has in store for his people. A new creation. A new creation. It's described as being co-terminus with the temple region of the holy mountain.

So the temple region is the holy mountain. But the holy mountain stretches as far as the new heaven and the new earth. The whole thing is holy mountain. The whole thing is full of the presence of God.

[48:21] Revelation 21, 22 says there's no temple. Meaning to say that normally speaking at the temple is the specialized place where God is more present than elsewhere.

But there's no temple because there is no specialized place of God's presence. He is equally present throughout the new creation. We can't imagine it. But let's think how wonderful that would be.

Maybe we should imagine it. So here was my four points. Number one, God's wonderful new creation, a new creation full of wonder.

Number two, the removal of the sting and pain of death itself. Number three, a home where we can be truly at home. We don't have to escape to the country as it were, but we find a home in God.

The removal of distance from God, in other words, his presence and a new world, a new ecosystem without harm or destruction. That's the hope that's promised here.

[49:23] So let's just reflect on what use this is, because I think this teaching has huge ramifications. I'm probably not capable of drawing them all out. I'll have a go at some of them.

Number one, it shows the value of this good spoiled world. It is a spoiled world, but it is a good world. It's not like a piece of discarded junk that God says, oh, I'm not interested in that.

It's got no future. But it is something where God says, I'll make a new one of these because I do value this plan and it needs to be reset.

But it's a plan that I'm in favour of. Upcycling, they say, don't they? Well, this world is due for upcycling. So it is worth cherishing this world. Don't set our hearts on it.

But we do care for it and we appreciate it and we thank God for it. It shows us that this world is not to be the be all and end all. Well, it isn't, is it?

[50:24] It is not worthy of our total souls investment. The error of humanity to worship this world instead of its maker is a very profound error.

Jesus said, what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul? This whole world as it now stands is not to be compared with the value of being there in the world to come.

It does show that there is a hope and a future and an ultimate meaning. And not only on the big scale is there an ultimate meaning, but the little things that make up life in this world now fall into perspective as having a meaning themselves.

Jesus said to his disciples, you know, even a cup of cold water given as a disciple, given for me, has a value and will not lose its reward.

So the little things that we do for the Lord in this life fit into the larger context and they have value. They're not lost. They're not meaningless.

[51:32] And it points us to the one who holds the keys of the future. The one who said, I am the resurrection and the life. The one who will have the last word of judgment. As we understand it, God made the world through his son, who became the incarnate Jesus Christ.

And he will finish the world through his son. He will be the one who wraps it all up and makes all things new. And he's this key person.

He has the keys. If you've never asked him to show you the keys and to make these promises relevant in your life, why don't you pray and ask him now to do that very thing.

And for those who've already made that, prayed that prayer and entered that relationship for his own people. You know, the future makes everything worthwhile.

Bye bye.

Bye bye.

Swallowed up in victory. We will meet in the air.

[59:30] And then we will be like him. For we will see him as he is.

Oh yeah Then all hurt and pain will cease And we'll be with Him forever And in His glory we will live

Oh yeah So lift your eyes To the things as yet unseen That will remain now For all eternity Though

trouble's hard It's only momentary And it's achieving

Our future glory We will meet Him in the air And then we will be like Him For we will see Him as He

is Oh yeah Then all hurt and pain will cease And we'll be with Him forever And in His glory we will

live Oh yeah Oh yeah To the ending

Thank you.