

Revelation 21:1-17

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[0:00] Welcome, welcome, kids. It is very good to see you. Congregation, it is very good to see all of you too! My family and I have been away on holiday, and so it feels really good to be back with our church family, worshipping together.

If you don't know me, which I think I know everybody, if you don't know me, I'm Jacob. I'm one of the ministers here at St. John's. And we've been in a sermon series this month that mirrored our Bible study, our summer Bible study a month ago.

And we're in the last week of our sermon series this week of asking some really big questions. And we've been answering some pretty big questions the past few weeks. Where did everything come from? What were we made for? And what's wrong with the world? That was last week.

And we have another big question this week, and the big question is this. What is our hope? What is our hope?

So that's what we're going to be talking about today. And to help us talk about that, I want to ask a question. Kids in congregation too, have you ever felt homesick?

[1:19] Homesick? Yeah? What does it mean to be homesick? What do you think? You miss home. You miss home. Yeah, that's good. Yeah, homesick. You know, it's that, and you kind of feel it in your body, don't you?

It's like a pain when you miss being at home, or you miss your family. I feel it sometimes. I feel it like right here in my heart, maybe the top of my stomach. And did you guys know that everybody, everybody feels homesick sometimes?

Everybody in the whole world. And you know what? That is not just a coincidence. We all feel this for a reason. Does anybody want to guess what the reason is?

It's a pretty big reason. Yeah, go ahead. Because you miss the people you love. You do miss the people you love. That's right. And everybody loves somebody. That's right. There's a big reason why we love people too.

And why we feel sick when we're not with them. And here's the reason why. We learned about it earlier in the month. It's that God made everything. And God made each one of us to be at home with Him forever.

[2:27] Did you know that? God made us to be at home with Him forever. But, and there's a big but, sin messed up that plan.

And sin separated us from God. And it took away our home with God. Which is very, very sad, isn't it? Now, maybe you all experienced this in some way.

Maybe you've lost your home. Or maybe you're losing your home. Or maybe you've lost someone who made your house feel like a home. Whatever it is for you kids or for all of us congregation, we all, in different ways, long for home.

And sometimes that is a very, very sad feeling. But, and there's another big but, and it's a very good but, scripture tells us that we have a very, very good hope.

And here it is. For everyone who knows Jesus, we have the wonderful hope that God is giving us a new home.

[3:40] And so that's what we're going to hear about from our scriptures today. Our hope of a new home. And so we're going to hear first from Isaiah chapter 11, I think. And we've got a team of folks behind us that are going to read it for us.

So I will step out of the way and we'll hear from Isaiah 11. Wow, kids. So did you hear that? God is preparing a wonderful and surprising new home for us, isn't he?

And did you hear what this new home is called in Isaiah? Anybody catch it? It was really brief. God calls it his holy mountain.

Everybody say, my holy mountain. My holy mountain. In the Old Testament, my holy mountain, when God said that, he was talking about Jerusalem. But, here in this passage, we're not talking about any ordinary Jerusalem, like the one that you could get on a plane and fly to right now. He's talking about what the writer of the book of Hebrews calls the heavenly Jerusalem. Heavenly Jerusalem. And so Isaiah is talking about our new home in heaven.

[4:55] Isn't that amazing? No. No? I think it's amazing. It is a yes. I think it's amazing. And I don't know about you, but I think that the way that Isaiah is describing this is pretty surprising, right?

It's kind of like a fairy tale. He says, like a wolf is going to lie down with a lamb. A leopard will lie down with a baby goat. A lion with a baby cow.

And this is very weird, isn't it? Yeah, it is really weird, I think. And to help us think through why this is so weird, I brought some things to show you.

When I was a little boy, my very first pet was a cat named Sam. And this is actually not a picture of Sam, my cat, but it looks just like him.

It looks just like him. My cat, Sam, that was my very first pet and I loved, I wanted a pet so bad. And he just showed up one day and it was a really great thing.

[6:03] Soon after that, we got another pet. We got another pet, which was a ferret. Has anybody ever heard of a ferret? This is, and my pet ferret was called Reggie.

Reggie the ferret. You want to see? Now, and I loved Reggie too. It was very cool. Very cool pet to have. Now, there were some important rules with Reggie.

We had a rule that anytime Sam, the cat, was inside the house, we had to have Reggie in a cage.

Can anybody guess why? Because Sam would eat Reggie.

Because Sam was hungry. Sam was hungry. And you know what? It is perfectly normal in our world for a cat to want to eat a ferret, which is normal, but kind of upsetting, right?

Like, you don't want Reggie to get eaten. And so we had to have this rule that we had to protect Reggie because Sam was liable to eat him.

[7:15] And so, when Isaiah says, you know, like, a wolf, which is very, very scary. Here, will you hold that for me? That's kind of a scary wolf.

Wolves are beautiful, but they can be really scary. And a lamb, if these two were to get together, what's going to happen? He would eat him. Say it louder. He would eat him.

He would eat him. That's right. That's the way that things work in this world, is the lamb stays away from the wolf because it's dangerous, right?

Now, in our heavenly home, Isaiah is telling us that all these creatures are going to live together in harmony. The lamb won't have to worry.

It's going to be something like this. I found this picture somebody painted. It's going to be like this, a wolf lying down with a lamb. Yeah? And everybody turn to the front of their bulletin.

[8:14] Somebody drew us a picture from Bible camp. This is a picture of what all of these animals are going to look like. And you can see, yeah, who drew this?

Does anybody? Who did? Anna Westerberg. She's not here today, I don't think. But, yeah. Beautiful picture. So this is what it's going to look like in our heavenly home.

So, what does all this mean? What does it mean? God is telling us that our new home that he's making us is going to be perfectly safe. Perfectly safe.

All the violence and the fighting and the hatred in the world is going to go away. And heaven will be a place of rest and peace for everybody, especially those who are vulnerable in this world.

And Isaiah says that this new, perfect, and safe home, this is going to come to be when the Savior, the root of Jesse, it says.

[9:15] Wow. When he comes and he tells the whole world who God is. Isn't that cool? That this world, this new heavenly home is going to come into being when the root of Jesse comes and tells the nations who God is.

Who does that sound like to you? Anybody have an idea? Who came and told us about what God is like? It's like and it's like his character and it's known because before it's like this character is better than God and it knows that it's all.

That's all. Yeah, yeah. Anybody, yeah, go ahead. Jesus, exactly. So when Isaiah talks about the root of Jesse, he's talking about Jesus and this is exactly what Jesus did on the cross, right?

He came and he showed us on the cross who God really is. He revealed that God is merciful and loving and kind. And as he showed us that on the cross, Jesus got rid of death.

He paid for our sin. He broke the power of sin that controls us so often now, that sin that makes us hurt each other. And Jesus fixed our relationship with God so that we could be perfectly safe with him and we'll never, ever have to be afraid of death.

[10:41] And so kids, we, because we're Christians, we hold on to this hope in our hearts every day that Jesus has won for us a new home and he's preparing it for us even right now.

And this is great news, right? Yes. But you know what? It gets even better. There's one more piece of the story that we're going to hear from Revelation chapter 21.

So let's hear that from the team now. A reading from Revelation chapter 21 verses 1 to 7.

This can be found on page 1041 of your pew Bible. Revelation chapter 21 starting at verse 1. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

[11:41] Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling of God, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more.

Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, Behold, I am making all things new.

Also he said, Write this down for these words are trustworthy and true. And he said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage and I will be his God and he will be my son.

[12:42] This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God. Isn't that amazing? What did we just hear?

Congregation, keep the Bible open at page 1041 for just a minute. Revelation 21 is telling us that we are not homesick for a place but we're actually homesick for a person.

We are homesick for God. Did you hear it? God's holy mountain, the new heavenly Jerusalem is going to come down out of heaven and God is going to make a new heaven and a new earth where what?

Where we can live with him forever. Look at verse 3. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with us and we will be his people and God himself will be with us as our God.

[13:55] Boys and girls, what this is telling us is that no place can ever fix our homesickness. The only thing that will ever make us happy is to be with God forever.

And you know what? That's exactly what God wants to do. To be with us forever. And that's exactly what he's going to do.

And it's wonderful. There will be no more pain, no more crying, no more mourning. Death will be no more. Because God is making all things new.

Like exactly like they should be. So my pets Reggie and Sam, they'll be able to live there together.

And they won't be in fear or in conflict. And this means for us too that we'll all be there together.

And there will be no fear and no conflict. And we'll be able to love each other like we should.

Revelations 21 tells us that our heavenly home is a wonderful, peaceful, restful, and fun place because God is going to be there with us.

[15:07] Have you ever wondered what God looks like? Anybody? Anybody wondered what God looks like? I've thought about it a lot. And in the new heaven and the new earth, we're going to get to see.

We're going to see God face to face. And as we gaze into his beautiful face, that homesick feeling that we all have is finally going to be satisfied.

But kids, in the meantime, you know what? We get to know God by faith, by having faith in the Lord Jesus, by trusting in his word to us, by singing songs to him, by loving and serving each other in the church.

And so for now, we get to know God's glorious face by faith in his word. We trust in his promises.

We live with the hope that our perfect home is waiting for us.

And it is absolutely sure. Look down at verse six with me. This is amazing. Write this down for these words are trustworthy and true.

[16 : 19] And God said, it is done. I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, to the thirsty I will give from the spring of life without payment.

This means that God has authority and power to make this happen and that he has said that it is true and it will surely come to pass. And you know what?

He's giving it to each one of us free of charge. We don't have to pay for it. All we have to do is see that we're homesick and then return home to him.

Amen? So let me pray for us that God would do that in our hearts even now. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word to us.

We thank you that it is sure and true that you have promised that we have a heavenly home waiting on us on the other side of death. Father, we ask that you would make us aware of our homesickness for you and help us to trust in Jesus, trust in his word to us, and to live our lives with that hope, knowing that you are the only thing that will satisfy our homesick hearts.

[17 : 33] We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.