# Revelation 7:15-17 “The Lamb-Shepherd”

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Date: 15 November 2026

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[0:00] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama.! Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

! So, Nash, we may have to do the installation next week. I got a lot of things to say.
This is actually our last Sunday in our Revelation series until January. January is a long way away, right? We're getting ready for Thanksgiving next week and the Christmas, the Advent season after that.
But, last week, we saw the wonder here in Revelation 7 of this multi-ethnic multitude, right? Sealed and saved by the blood of the Lamb, gathered around the throne of heaven, worshiping.
And today we're going to focus on just the last three verses that are about our relationship with Jesus through eternity.
[1:24] There's no disagreement that these three verses are talking about the future, our eternal hope. Some people think, maybe, maybe we think too much about eternity.

Especially when we read a book like Revelation and week after week, your head's in the clouds all the time. But, John Calvin said we should think about, meditate on eternity, on our next life all the time to help us live appropriately in this life.
God tells us to set your minds on things above to help us live here. So, this is, remember, why God gave His persecuted, suffering people this book.
It's to help them live in the midst of struggle, of suffering, with hope, with confidence. God wants you to glimpse today how He will care for you forever.
He wants you to get a glimpse of that. It's at the end of Revelation 7. One of the elders has just told John about the multitude of God's people with robes washed in the blood of the Lamb.
[2:50] We'll pick up at verse 15. Verse 15.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. This is God's word. Let's ask for His help. God, what a beautiful, wonderful, beyond words picture of where we're headed.
Would you help us to see the wonder of it? Would you help us to see Jesus clearly? Our good shepherd. Work in our hearts by Your Spirit, we ask in Jesus' name.
Amen. There's an amazing connection right here at the beginning of these verses that I don't want us to miss. The elder, as he's speaking, starts here with, with therefore.
Therefore, after He has just explained, God's glorified people have gotten to wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, the Lamb does all these things for them forever.
[4:31] It's amazing stuff, right? You might expect that if everything was going to balance out fairly in this passage, that at this point, therefore, after the Lamb has sacrificially served God's people by giving His very life, therefore, therefore, therefore, they now serve Him.

And sometimes that's how we think Christianity works. It's just paying Jesus back our whole lives. And, of course, they are worshiping Him here.
That part, that response is part of it. But, y'all, it's... Christianity, a relationship with Jesus, is so much better than that.
Look, this is what it's saying. Could it really be that the Lamb who has humbled Himself to die so that we can wash our robes in His blood and stand before our God, could it be that now that we are home, He is the one that serves us?
He keeps serving us and caring for us? Friends, that is not balancing the scales of justice. That is amazing grace beyond what we could ever ask for.
[5:57] It's like what Jesus is doing is being like the hero in the fairy tale stories that we've all read. The hero travels across land and sea, right?

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He fights dragons. He storms a castle, all to rescue the abandoned, trapped princess, and then have her as His bride.
And having done all that, He then, what? Never leaves her side, right? His whole life He makes about loving and serving her. At least, that's the best princes in the stories.
That's the story of the gospel, isn't it? That's what Jesus has done. Jesus doesn't stop at being the Lamb who was slain to pay for our sins.
Jesus doesn't stop at being the Lamb who rises from the dead to give us victorious righteousness. My word. But now we read He will keep being our shepherd forever.
[7:00] Forever. It should boggle our minds. It should stir our hearts, y'all, that Jesus relates to us like this.

And so just try to wrap your minds around who He is, right? We've already seen the Lion of Judah, the powerful King, is also a Lamb. And now that Lamb is also what?
A shepherd. A lion, a lamb, a shepherd. In fact, Jesus shepherds us through all eternity. So I want us to just revel for a few minutes this morning in what He says that means.
So for these few minutes, Nash, all others called to be under shepherds. Right now we remember that we are sheep first.
Sheep of the Lamb. Sheep of the Good Shepherd. Let's never forget that, right? Let's help each other remember that. God's people have not always been well cared for by human shepherds.
[8:11] Some of you have been hurt. Most of you have been disappointed in some way at some time by human shepherds.

But because God knows that, God Himself has promised to be our shepherd. All the way back to Ezekiel 34.
I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep. I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. I will seek the lost. I will bring back the straight.
I will bind up the injured. I will strengthen the weak. The fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. Yes, God will.
So what will the Lamb Shepherd so graciously give all of those for eternity that He has already saved? First, it tells us it's His constant presence.
[9:14] Look at verse 15. They're before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will shelter them with His presence.

Constantly. Day and night. In His temple. His house. The place God dwells. And He will shelter them there with His presence.
That phrase translates a word for tabernacling. It's like when the Word became flesh and dwelt, tabernacled, made His presence among us.
Right, John 1? This here is saying He's casting His tabernacle, His dwelling, His tent upon us. Over us.
See, this is taking God's presence to another level. Okay, let me try to explain. This entire passage is promised in the Old Testament. This part here in Ezekiel 37.
[10:18] God says, I will set my sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling place shall be with them. And I will be their God. And they will be my people. My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.

And we hear that promise. And probably like God's people then, we picture that physically, right? Right? Spatially. God's got a tent. Among all the other Israelite tents, there's God's tent.
Sure enough, that was the tabernacle right there. So if we're with God in His temple, then we might picture we're always in this one place.
We go to the temple like we go to church. No. No, no. This is bigger and better than that. How do we know?
Well, remember Revelation 21 tells us there is no temple, as it were, in heaven. God and the Lamb are the temple. You see what He's saying here then in chapter 7?
[11:20] God spreads His temple over them everywhere they go. So now stretch your imagination. What does this look like? It's not going to one little place.

His presence, His temple is like, if you will, an island, except the island keeps going with no water. Or conversely, it's like an ocean, except the ocean keeps going on and there's never any land.
It is the whole thing. Maybe you could think about sunlight with no night or darkness ever coming. Yes, we're in God's temple, but y'all, nothing in heaven is not God's temple.

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Do you see that? He's spread it everywhere over all of us. So while you sing and while you create and while you serve and while you love your neighbor, God embraces you with His constant presence.
It's really amazing to me when you think of sheep, right? Sheep wander all over a mountainside, and then when the shepherd comes, this human shepherd needs to track them all down after mile and mile.
[12:37] No, that's not the picture here. We're never alone. There is nowhere apart from the warm presence, the deep relationship of the divine shepherd.

He has sealed you. He has saved you. And He will shepherd you and never leave your side. Ever. But that's just getting started.
Because His temple cast over us, shelters us, protects us. Verse 16, the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.
It's echoing Isaiah 49, verse 10. Neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them. He who has pity on them will lead them. See, this is what God promises His people, right?
Protection from attack, from enemies, even from a creation that is under a curse, so that the great gift of light and heat to bless us actually harms us at times.
[13:45] He says no sunburn, no sickness, no sin, no storms of any sort can get to us. They can't touch you.

The description brings to mind for me something like a force field. Kids, if you've seen the movie The Incredibles, right? They cast a force field over and nothing gets around it to them except this is even better.
It's not actually a separate structure or shelter or a different force field. What is it? It's actually God Himself. It's His presence that totally covers us like that.
He's the shepherd whose presence is so all-encompassing, so all-powerful, that nothing can ever get to us or harm us. Nothing. All of heaven, wherever we are, wherever we go, exists within His hands.
We're covered by His sovereign power. We're held in His strong and tender hands forever. Y'all, He is telling you, He's not letting anything happen to His precious sheep.
[14:53] You can count on it. Nothing. Then look back to the beginning of verse 16 to see God's promised provision as our shepherd.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore. Not only safe, but also satisfied, right?
It's promised again in Isaiah 49. But it's made even more personal by Jesus in John 6. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger.
Whoever believes in me shall never thirst. See, certainly this does include physically, but you can tell this is going beyond that, to include the deep emotional cravings of our souls.
So listen, when the Lamb Shepherd cares for us forever, we will not be lonely anymore. We won't battle anxiety anymore.
[15:55] We won't feel insecure or worthless anymore. No, He's going to lead us into green pastures that fill our stomachs, but even more importantly, that restore our souls.

Last thing, verse 17. For, this is that little word, the reason. In case you were wondering, some of you are very careful. This is the reason I can comfortably ascribe all these realities we're reading about to the Lamb Shepherd.
All these gifts are ours eternally, for the Lamb will be our shepherd. He will guide us to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from our eyes.
This is the Lamb Shepherd. This is the Lamb Shepherd giving us eternally His very perfection. I don't know any bigger way to say it.
First, by the good He gives us, and then by the evil He takes away from us. He guides us to springs of living water. The same thing Jesus offered the Samaritan woman at the well in John chapter 4.
[17:15] Jesus says, Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water I will give him will become in him a spring of water.

There it is. Welling up to eternal life. Jesus, again speaking primarily spiritually, although the woman struggles to realize that for a while, right?
The spring of water. What's the spring of water Jesus is referring to? It's eternal life. Life in the constant presence of the Lamb Shepherd, protected from all evil, provided all good.

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That's life. He says, That life is the true abundant life that you were made for, and it's beyond what you can imagine. Did you catch what he's saying? He's saying that life is better than being a famous influencer, or a billionaire tech executive, or an adored sports star.
That life is better. That life is better than living in a nice neighborhood, and retiring early, and having good friends. It's better than that. That life is better than piles of money, and great sex, and powerful positions in the world.
[18:35] This life is better, he says. He wants you to know you're looking forward to something that is better, because any of the security, or pleasure, or significance, or comfort, or purpose, or peace that you've experienced in any of those other things, that you've tasted there, it's just that.

It's a taste. It's even an imperfect, inadequate substitute for the glorious life that God made you to enjoy in his perfect world.
In perfect relationship with him. In perfect love with others. In perfect harmony with his new creation. That's what he made you for. And, when you're there in that life, nothing can interrupt it, or take it away, ever.
God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, which is the glorious fulfillment of Isaiah 25, 8.
He will swallow up death forever. And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces. See, how does God wipe the tears away?
[19:52] He goes beneath the surface, doesn't he? He goes to the problem beneath the problem. He does it by removing the parts of his creation that cause those tears that were never meant to be.

Death. Death. Gone. Swallowed up forever. No more losing loved ones too often and too soon. Dementia. Gone. No more living with the pain of feeling you've already lost someone. Cancer. Gone. No more fear of when it's going to come back or if it's going to spread. Miscarriage. Gone. Divorce. Gone. Depression. Gone. Forever. Because the one who's our shepherd has not overlooked a single detail in his perfect world.
[20:55] and he has not overlooked a single one of his precious sheep who have been hurt by all those things that he never wants them to suffer under.

And that he is coming to remove so that all of us can know that the things that have hurt us here cannot anymore.
Ever. perfect life and no more tears in the constant presence of the Lamb Shepherd.
Don't you want to be there? Aren't you ready for that day that never ends? That's just a brief glimpse at eternity with the Lamb Shepherd.
We should think on it more often. If you get stuck there that's fine. Just keep thinking about it. But it's appropriate also as we close to think about today.
[22:05] There are some of you who don't you don't feel quite like you're living the life I'm describing right now. And it hurts.

Maybe you're wondering about the parts of the parts of this promise that are not yet fulfilled. What's going on?
That's not I got lots of tears pastor. Y'all this life is tough for sheep. I've never been a shepherd of woolly lambs but I did get to hold one in Ireland this summer.
One of the things you realize when you're out there on a windy mountainside where sheep outnumber shepherds by hundreds or thousands to one is how hard it is for sheep wool to stay white.
One little stumble into the gravelly dirt. One annoying little bug landing on your back. What's a sheep to do? One little puddle splashing dirty water.
[23:23] I mean if you were to keep your famously white coat white and pure it would require virtually constant one-on-one attention and care and cleansing over and over for the moments that we still have lots of tears when we're waiting a lot of you are waiting right now for the final fulfillment of these promises.

How do I wait? Well we already have Psalm 23. You've heard it read you've heard it sung. Psalm 23 is not telling you what will be is it?
But the Lord is my shepherd. As you keep reading you find out he is my shepherd when enemies still attack when there's a valley of a shadow of death still to walk through when still there are unrighteous paths that you might fall into.
He already in these moments is your shepherd. You are already as Philip Keller calls you a mere mortal yes but the cherished object of divine diligence.

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He all of him is focused on you. He's already with you. He's already caring for you even before he makes all things new and all things perfect which he promises he will with even the worst and the most hopeless of those things that we deal with.
[25:04] He is there with you seeing all of them weeping with you making plans to wipe away all those tears. That's what he's doing. He's with you today.

Just think about how he's already been a shepherd. See Jesus when he came into this world had the eyes of a shepherd already how did he look around and see people he saw them as harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd and Jesus saw us like that and he refused to leave us that way didn't he so he became the good shepherd John 10 who already has laid down his life for the sheep who has been slain to wash you white and then he was raised to life again to be the great shepherd of the sheep Hebrews 13 who lives so that you too can know eternal life in the face of death that's not the end there's something more and he makes sure that you have that already because he knows that all we like sheep have gone astray in fact 1 Peter 2 tells us we keep doing that even after the good shepherd washes us clean don't let the righteous white wool analogy confuse you here every analogy has issues you cannot lose
Jesus' righteousness that he has given to you I'm not saying that but we surely do stray like sheep yes into sin into unbelief into forgetting the glorious gifts of the gospel and we need our shepherd to restore our souls and he's doing that this is what he's telling us is that he's doing that already with divine diligence constant personalized one-on-one attention care cleansing even today when you wander when you dirty your coat see because Peter finally says he is the shepherd and overseer of your soul already he's shepherding your soul so hurting friend wandering friend trapped friend maybe maybe this morning you say I'm
I'm a sorrowful friend or suffering friend or I'm becoming a hopeless friend please hear this it is for the exact reason that you are not yet experiencing the fullness of these promises that you need to turn to your lamb shepherd today that's why you need him now when we most realize we're not in heaven yet we most need to focus our eyes on the one who is the center piece of all of that perfection and that perfect everlasting life the lamb is indeed the chief shepherd first Peter five who will appear again and will bring those that his blood has already sealed and saved into his eternal presence and protection and provision and perfection he will and so today the lord is my shepherd there is where we find peace there's where we find joy there's where we find hope unending let's pray
Jesus thank you for giving us such a beautiful picture of how you shepherd us we're so so grateful to be your sheep we're grateful that as a shepherd you are still the way into the sheep fold so that anyone here today who's who's saying I'm not but I want to be a sheep of a shepherd like that just has to believe in you and will never hunger or thirst again how good you are you didn't end it at the cross you didn't end it at the tomb you live and you intercede for us and you watch over us and we thank you and we find our hope in you and so help us bring us back again from any of the places we've strayed to be your sheep and help us to rest in your arms in Jesus name amen for more information visit us online at southwood.org

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