

A Little Glimpse Of Heaven

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Date: 13 December 2020

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- [0 : 0 0] Very good morning to everybody today and as you join with us here in Stornway Free Church, we pray that we will all know the blessing of God and the worship today.
- We're going to begin by reading from Psalm 45, the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 45, the first version. And we're going to read from verse 13.
- Behold the daughter of the King, all glorious is within, and with embroideries of gold her garments wrought have been. She shall be brought unto the King in robes with needle wrought.
- Her fellow virgins following shall unto thee be brought. They shall be brought with gladness great and mirth on every side into the palace of the King and there they shall abide.
- Instead of those thy fathers dear, thy children thou mayst take, and in all places of the earth them noble princes make. Thy name remembered I will make, through ages all to be.
- [1 : 0 0] The people therefore evermore shall praises give to thee. Let us now bow in prayer. Lord, we give thanks again for another day and for another morning.
- And we pray that in this morning that we will know you as the Lord of the resurrection morning, our Lord Jesus Christ who rose from the dead and performed in that rising the most amazing thing that this world could even begin to grasp or lay hold of or understand.
- Although we cannot really understand it, but faith grasps it fully and we absolutely believe it. And the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is central to all that we are.
- We do not worship a dead saviour, but a living saviour, one who is risen as he declares himself, I am alive forevermore. And that is one of the most wonderful, glorious truths that we can hang our life upon and depend entirely.
- We give thanks, Lord, that in a world that is full of change, a sea of change, that we worship a God who is free from change. As the world declares, I am the Lord, I change not, the same yesterday, today and forever.
- [2 : 2 5] And so we ask, O Lord, that we might be given the faith to see you, even though at times we see like through a dark glass. And our vision is so often impaired because of sin and because of all the darkness that clouds our mind and our understanding and all the lusts and the enemies of our soul that war against us.
- We do battle. The Christian life is a battle. It's a struggle. Some days we feel that we're winning and other days we feel we're losing.
- But, O Lord, we give thanks that you won't give up with us. That's one of the wonderful things that your word assures us of, that you keep us, that you sustain us, that you uphold us, that you will never let us go.
- If we were to look to ourselves and who we are, we would be filled with trepidation and we would know that we would never make it to the heavenly shore. But we give thanks that your word assures us that once we are in Christ, we are safe in Christ and that there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

We give thanks, O Lord, that your word assures us of how it will be at the end and that you will take your people, where they are brought with gladness great and mirth on every side, into the palace of the king, and there they shall abide, abiding forever.

[3 : 53] And we give thanks, O Lord, that this is a portion of your people. And although sometimes in this world we are drawn aside by so many things that tempt us and pull us, yet there is within us an abiding principle and an abiding love and an abiding sense of our destiny and our purpose and of all that you are planning for us and have planned for us.

And we give thanks, O Lord, for this. Be with us then today as we come under your word. May the word of God shape our lives. Forgive us, Lord, for when we are willing to put your word aside in order to follow our own way.

We ask that more and more your word will be central to our lives, that your truth will guide us in the right way, that we will know that you are our God, that we will lean not to our own understanding, but in all our ways that we will acknowledge you.

Help us to trust in the Lord with all our heart. We pray that you will bless everybody, young and old alike. Pray for the elderly, Lord, who, as they struggle often in life with all the difficulties, that old age brings and maybe a growing sense of anxiety because of the COVID and flu on the go.

We give thanks, Lord, for the vaccine that is being rolled out. And we pray that this, over time, will prove so effective and that it will enable us to get back to a greater degree of normality.

[5 : 27] We pray for our elderly who have so often felt trapped and isolated, not being able to see loved ones for a long time. It's been very, very difficult for them.

And we pray that you will help them. We pray, Lord, for our young people, as they grow up in a day full of challenges, a day where the enthusiasm of youth in some ways is even dashed because of the circumstances just now, because it's a very, very difficult time for young people, particularly those who are coming to the place where they'll be sitting final exams and thinking of moving on to further places of education or wherever.

And it's a time where there's so much uncertainty regarding work. And so, Lord, we pray for our young people at this time. Lord, be gracious to them.

And we ask that you will help them in the difficult, challenging times that they're in. And we pray, Lord, for those who are under threat of losing their work and those who have already.

And there are so many jobs that seem secure. And so many people, their lives were built on that security that they felt that they had. And yet, all of a sudden, what seemed so secure is gone.

[6 : 49] And, O Lord, we pray that in all the uncertainty and all the distress that this brings, that you will help, Lord. Help us as a nation. Lord, we look to you.

There's no one else we can look to. And we pray that you will indeed guide us and that you will do us good. You bless our leaders, those all in authority over us.

We pray that you'll grant them wisdom, even if they're not looking to you. May they be given divine wisdom. We pray, Lord, that you will put your wisdom at heart so that it won't be man-made decisions or woman-made decisions, but God's decisions for good.

That will be what they will do. We ask, Lord, that you will be gracious to us and that you will bless your word now to us as we come to it. And that we will once again hear what God the Lord will speak.

Forgive us of every sin, we pray. And we ask, Lord, that you will bless those who mourn, those whose hearts are sore and broken, those who have lost loved ones. And death changes our home circumstances so radically.

[7 : 53] And so we pray for those who have broken in their heart and bruised in their minds. Lord, may your healing come in. As they mourn, loved ones, and they were so conscious of death.

It's been a robber and continues to rob right up to this present time. Take away from us our every sin, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Just going to say a wee word to the young folk.

I came across a story one time, and maybe it's a story you all know yourself. And there's a small town, I think it was somewhere down in England, I'm not sure. And in the town, there was an artist.

Everybody knew this artist, and he had a studio. And he had a lot of beautiful paintings in the window. People used to stop and look at the paintings. And he was well known in the community.

And one day he was having a walk down by the river. And he stopped because there was this boy, Harry. And as he looked at this boy who was fishing, he thought, Whoa, I really would love to paint what I am seeing in front of me there.

[9 : 09] Because Harry was the most disheveled-looking boy you've ever seen. He must have been crawling through gush bushes and maybe brambles, because his hair was standing out like a sweep's brush.

There was mud all over his face. In fact, it even looked like he hadn't wiped his face since he had left the house, because it looked like there was little bits of toast and marmot still on his cheek.

His clothes were covered in bits of gush and bits of twigs and whatnot, because he had obviously been going through bushes and gush bushes and whatnot before he came fishing.

His trousers were ripped. And he had two trainers. One trainer, the laces were open. And the other trainer didn't have laces at all.

And the artist said, My word, this is a dream for an artist to try and paint. So he came up to the boy and he says, Where do you stay in? I told him where he's staying. He said, Could you and your mum come down to, Do you know my studio there?

[10 : 28] And the boy said, Oh, yes. He said, Oh, we know who you are. But he said, Could you come down to my studio after tea tonight? You're shopping your mum. And because I want to paint you. Ask your mum if that's all right.

And I'll give you money for it. I'll give you 50 pounds. I said, Oh, do it right. I'll be there. What time do you say? Half past six. Half past six. I'll be there. She goes running.

Oh, ma'am, ma'am. Guess what? You know the artist downtown. Mother said, Yes. He wants to paint me. Half past six tonight. Mother said, Whoa, brilliant. 50 pounds.

Right. You get up to the shower. You're going to scrub yourself. So mum made sure that Harry was the most gleaming boy when he went out with her. He had a beautiful white shirt, crisp as anything.

Beautiful clean trousers. Shoes that were so polished you could almost see your face in them. Air combed. Face shining. And I knocked at the artist's door and the artist came and he says, he just looked at them and he says, hello.

[11 : 32] He says, can I help you? Harry said, it's me. Remember, you said 50 pounds. You were going to paint me. The artist's face fell. Oh, I said, I didn't want you like that.

I wanted you to come just as you were. There were lots of people I could paint like that, but you were so scruffy. I thought, wow, I would love to try and paint you like that.

Why didn't you come just as you were? You know, Jesus asks us to come to him. And you know what he asks us to do? To come just as we are.

He doesn't ask us to try and make ourselves better first. Because we can't. It doesn't matter. You see, Harry tried to make himself. Tried to make himself better.

But it didn't work. And we so often try when Jesus says, calls us to him. We try and say, oh, I'll have to make myself better first.

[12 : 34] No, we can't. Because there's nothing we can do. You know the old nursery rhyme, humpty dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty dumpty had a great fall. All the king's horses, all the king's men couldn't put humpty together again.

Humpty dumpty was an egg. And you and I know when an egg falls, bang, smash. And with all the skill and all the glue and whatever in the world, you can't put that egg together again.

And that's kind of how it is with us. We can't make ourselves right, no matter what we try and do. And far too often, people try and make themselves better before they come to Jesus.

No. Jesus is the only one that can mend the mess. Jesus is the only one who can sort us. Because we fell, when Adam fell at the very beginning, the image of God, we were made in the image of God.

It was like smashing a mirror, smashed, gone. And only the Lord is able to restore. And that's what Jesus does. And he says, come as you are.

[13 : 45] Just come. Don't start trying to make yourself better by doing this, that, and the next thing. Just come. Come today. Come as you are. And say, Lord Jesus, come into my heart.

And Jesus begins to restore us inside to out. He begins the work slowly within our heart. Comes instantly. But it's a lifelong work going on.

So I would ask you today, if you've never come to Jesus and asked Jesus to come into your heart, into your life, to be king in your life, ask him today.

Don't say, well, I'll leave until next week. I'll leave until the last Sunday of the year. And I'll really work from now until then. In fact, I'll leave until the first Sunday of next year. And that's going to be when all the New Year resolutions come in.

And I'm going to be so much better. And I'll come to Jesus. No, you won't. You won't be any better. Come now, just as you are, and ask Jesus into your life.

[14 : 43] Let's say the Lord's Prayer. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. Let's read God's Word now in the book of the Revelation. The book of the Revelation and the last chapter, chapter 22, Revelation, chapter 22.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, through the middle of the street of the city.

Also on either side of the river, the tree of life, with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

[15 : 50] No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads, and night shall be no more.

They will need no light, or lamp, or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. And he said to me, These words are trustworthy and true.

And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place. And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me.

But he said to me, You must not do that. I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers, the prophets. And with those who keep the words of this book, worship God.

[16 : 54] And he said to me, Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.

Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers, and the sexually immoral and murderers, idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things. For the churches, I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.

The Spirit and the Bride say come, and let the one who hears say come, and let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

[18 : 12] I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.

And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city which are described in this book.

He who testifies to these things says, surely I am coming soon. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all.

Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his own holy word. And I want us this morning particularly to consider from verse 3.

Now as we know, this book, the book of Revelation, really captures a person's imagination.

[19 : 24] Some of the imagery in it is really quite extraordinary. It's fascinating. We kind of find our minds being stretched by it.

It's a book that fascinates us because it deals with the future. And there's something within the human heart that wants to know something of what the future is all about. I suppose we could add with that we want to know the good parts of our future.

We wouldn't want to know our future if our future was full of pain and sorrow and difficulties. God alone knows the future, irrespective of what other people will tell you.

God alone knows the future. God alone is omniscient, omnipresent. Satan isn't. Satan's knowledge is incredible.

His power is amazing. But he is not omniscient like God is. He does not know everything. God alone knows everything. God alone knows when the end of the world will be.

[20 : 23] God alone knows when the return, when the Lord alone knows when the return of Jesus into this world is. Not even the angels in heaven today know when that is.

That is a secret that belongs to the Godhead alone, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, as we say, the book of Revelation is often very hard for us to understand because it's dealing with things that we don't understand ourselves.

We've never come to grasp or to lay hold of because it's dealing with future events. And it's talking about an environment that we cannot understand.

An environment where there's going to be no pain and no sorrow and no tears and no death. And that, of course, as we know, is part and partial of, sadly, of life here.

It's been so since the fall. So, the book of Revelation is talking about this kind of state and this kind of environment. And, of course, it's only natural that the Christian wants to read about this and hear about this.

[21 : 34] Because we're saying to ourselves as we read this, this is how it's going to be for me. This is where I am going to go. This is my future. And I really want to know as much as I possibly can about what my future is.

If you or I were going to emigrate to Australia or to Canada or somewhere like that, we would want to. We'd be reading up as much as we could. We'd be looking at as much as we could to try and find out and to discover as much as we possibly could about where we're going before we actually go.

And so it is with regard to heaven. We want to know as much as possible. And I think the older the Christian gets in this world, the more we're wanting to know.

And I think it's quite interesting that, by and large, the unbeliever thinks so differently. Because the unbeliever doesn't spend a lot of time thinking about heaven or hell.

About what heaven holds and what hell holds. It's not something that they really want to consider. It's not something that they give much. In fact, for many people, they just blank it out.

[22 : 45] For some people who have a sense of God in their life and such like, they just kind of hope that it will be all right at the end of the day. But they have no idea other than that. But there are many who just blank it out and they say, No, there is no heaven.

There is no hell. There's no God. They just dismiss these things. Well, the truth of the matter is this. That irrespective of how an individual deals with these things, whether they try and blank it out, ignore it, forget it, it doesn't alter what is there.

We can't change just by your thinking the realities of heaven and hell and eternity and all that is ahead. But the Christian is somebody who is more and more thinking about the future that is to be.

Now, in verse 3 it says, No longer will there be anything accursed. Now, that in itself is amazing because we live with curse.

It happened at the fall where we ourselves fell under that curse. That is where death and illness and separation and all that is wrong with ourselves, it started there.

[24 : 00] The day that you eat of the fruit, God said, You will die. The process of death and everything attached to death began at that moment. It wasn't that there was going to be, that Adam was going to drop dead the moment he took it, but he was going to bring death into the equation.

And by bringing death into the equation, all the rippling effect, the whole process of death, all its ugliness and all its division and separation and its pain and its sorrow and everything came in at that moment.

But not only the human race was affected, but the very world, the earth was affected by the curse. And God said that it was from the sweat of the brow that Adam would work as living and that the very earth was going to be, as it were, against him in many ways, where there would be the weeds and all these things.

Our gardens bear testimony to the fall. You know how aggressive the weeds and the rushes and thistles and all these things can be in their growth and how they strangle and how they can spoil a good garden unless you keep on top of it all the time.

This is the aggressive weed, which is a reminder to us of the fall, where it's all gone wrong. And this world, this whole world, is under the curse.

[25 : 25] We're told that the creation groans. Now we read so much today about climate change and such like, and of course we should do everything that we know will help climate change.

And it's madness to say, ach, it doesn't matter. We have to, because we owe it to ourselves. But the thing is this, in many ways, we feel that, in some ways that you think, it's going to be a losing battle because we can't control this world.

We can help, but we can't control. Because there's earthquakes and tsunamis and volcanoes and tornadoes and hurricanes and all these things.

We can't control them. It's all part of the world that is in chaos. The earth is in upheaval and it has been since the fall. But the wonderful thing is that in the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwells righteousness, there'll be nothing of that.

Everything will be in perfect harmony and it'll be wonderful. So there'll be nothing to hinder or to harm us or to threaten us in any shape or form.

[26 : 39] Now, in the previous chapter, we see that the heavenly city, that the gates there, that they won't be shut because what it's saying is they won't be shut at night because there is no night there.

Isn't that a wonderful thought? Because there'll be no night there. And, of course, the city gate was, if there was anything threatening or anything that looked like there could be danger here, the gates of the city, back in the Old Testament time, the gates were shut.

And the gates were always shut at night as well as a form of protection. But who is the gate in glory? It's Christ. And no one and nothing can enter into heaven but in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no other way in. He is the door. He is the gate. So eternal security is guaranteed. He is the protection. Nothing that is evil or nothing that defiles can enter that city.

It's a city of complete and total protection and it's a city of complete and total rest. Again, back in Bible times, the thought of the wilderness and the desert was the place of restlessness, of the place of uncertainty.

[28 : 06] There was a fear. There was, they were always looking for a city that they might go to rest in. They strayed and wandered in deserts place. No city could they find to rest.

But when you found rest, once you find the city, of course, it's the very opposite today. We've said this before. Cities have a totally different picture for us because cities now are often the places where there isn't rest.

And some cities, they say like New York, it never sleeps because it seems to be going night and day. But heaven is a place of absolute rest.

So there'll be nothing to disturb. Won't be wearied or tired or exhausted anymore. So again, we find it very hard to understand a world with no illness, with no pain, with no exhaustion or none of these things.

Perfect peace and harmony. And then we see there that the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it and his servants will worship him. Now we're told plenty of things that won't be in glory but we're also told positively what will be there.

[29 : 14] And so we see here there's God the Father and God the Son. And of course, they will be making heaven what it is. And the beauty of it is that there is now no hindrance, no hindrance whatever to our enjoyment of him.

Now you and I know that in this world so much has hindered our enjoyment of our worship, of God the Father and God the Son as we seek to worship the Lord.

There's so many things get in the way. And it's just like we get faint glimpses of it. Because the clouds of sin so block our view of the heavenlies.

And even if, you see the thing is, even if the Lord was to open up us and to reveal glory to us and revealing what heaven is really like, we couldn't take it.

Our finite minds, our finite bodies couldn't take it. We'd be overwhelmed. We'd be overcome. We'd be overcome by it. But when we leave this world and go to glory, we will be suitably prepared for it.

[30 : 21] The Lord will see to all that. But in the moment, we struggle. Yes, we look to the Lord, we worship the Lord, and we long to see, but it's always this haze.

There are moments the Lord gives us a powerful glimpse of himself. And sometimes there are moments where the Lord bathes us with his love. and we say, Lord, I am good. This is wonderful.

Oh, Lord, this, I am so full of you. This is wonderful. But it doesn't last. It doesn't last. And we long for more and we long, if you've had a glimpse, if you've had a touch, if you've understood that, it's what you long for again and again.

But so often, it's not what we want. We long for it. And so, there's this longing to see him, to see him as he is.

And, you see, one of our great complaints is how little we love him. Do you ever complain like that and say, you know, I wish I loved the Lord more? You know, maybe, excuse me, maybe you're thinking to yourself, every other Christian I know, I believe, loves the Lord more than I do.

[31 : 35] That's how you feel. You love the Lord, but you feel you're the poorest lover that the Lord has here in this world. That everybody else has a clearer sight, a clearer knowledge, a better love than you.

Because you think, my love is so, so poor. How on earth does the Lord keep up with me? Because of how, stay with me because of how little I love him.

Well, you know, sometimes you might feel that your love for the Lord is so low that you don't love him at all. Let me assure you that if that is the way you feel and you're lamenting your lack of love and you're beginning to doubt that you're a Christian at all because you say, my sense of love, I want, I want to love him more.

Only a Christian can feel like that. Only a Christian can be talking like that. That is Christian experience, not the experience of anybody else. It's an evidence that God's love is already in you.

And the fact that you long for that day is evidence that that work is already going on within your heart. And in glory, the royal scepter will be extended to you.

[32 : 57] There will be nothing to hinder you or nothing to keep you back because you notice what it says here. And his servants will worship him.

Here is the king on his throne, the throne of God. It is speaking of his dignity and his majesty and his glory, his dominion, his authority, his power, his might.

And as we worship him, we will see all this and we'll fall down before him. Amazed. That here we are and we're actually in the presence of the king of glory.

We sang about him here. We read about him here. We knew a little about him here. But oh, we are now in his presence. What we long for in this world.

And it tells us his servants will worship him. And this will be a worship that will be pure and it will be spiritual. Where all the glory will be given to him.

[33 : 57] And it's a worship of service. Because, you see, the moment that we come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we begin to serve. We're saved to serve. And you and I, the moment we became Christians, in our own way, and sometimes in a very quiet way, we're serving the Lord.

We serve him in anything that we do by faith. We serve him and, of course, we all serve him and worship. Whenever we worship, whether, and it can be worshipped privately, it can be worshipped publicly, but our life can be worshipped.

Because if we're living with a sense of praise, if we are living a life of praise to God and a life seeking to glorify God, then our very life is a worship in itself.

So we've got to realise, yes, there's public worship and there's private worship, but our lives themselves ought to be a worship. Now, you and I know our service here is often flawed.

And there's many a time after we've done whatever it is that we try and do for the Lord. And we're so aware that we didn't do the way that we had hoped we would be able to do.

[35 : 10] And whether it is preaching or praying or singing or teaching or practical serving or the thousand and one different ways that we can be involved in doing anything for the Lord, so often we feel that it was so imperfect, our service was so flawed, so many things got in the way, sin got in the way, pride got in the way, self got in the way, our motives aren't always right.

Sometimes Christian service can look good. you know, you can see somebody and you say, oh my word, what a wonderful Christian that is. Look at all she's doing, look at all he's doing, look at all.

And the spirit might be completely wrong, the motives might be wrong, the attitude might be wrong, things that we can't see but God sees. But in glory, it will be a perfect service all the time.

And it will be a service of liberty and a service of freedom. It will be energising service. You know, sometimes, now I know that in Christian service, often, it is energising.

And there have been times, maybe, I can say it personally, I've gone out and I felt burdened and heavy and yet, after preaching, it's like, it's not just a weight has come off but actually, I felt energised by God in it.

[36 : 42] And God will often do that but, having said that, often, as well, I shouldn't say often but there are times our service we feel is a burden.

I don't believe any Christian has gone through this world never experiencing the burden that can be involved in serving the Lord. Because, you see, there's the sense of inadequacy.

We don't feel fit for it. We don't feel that we're equipped for it. Then you're fighting all the enemies where there's all the problems within our own heart, within our own life. And then there's the whole area of temptation and where the powers of darkness are unleashed against you.

And there are all these forces at work all the time. And so, often, in our service there are burdens attached to it. But in glory that will never be so because all these burdens are completely gone.

And our service will be one of liberty and one of freedom and one of sheer enjoyment. Then it tells us they shall see his face.

[37 : 49] And here is the fulfillment of that deepest longing. Many an artist has tried to paint the face of Jesus Christ. Now, of course, the Bible tells us very little.

We have very little knowledge. We know he's beautiful. But we have very little knowledge of his features, of what he actually looks like. So, it's all just imagination. But there in glory we will look into his face.

And we've got to remember that Jesus Christ in glory as our mediator is there in human nature. Glorified but in our human nature because when he took human nature to himself he didn't take it just for the duration of his journey in this world.

He took it forever. And in glory we will see him as he is and we will be like him. Isn't that wonderful? And we will look into his face and as it were look into his eyes.

They say that the eyes are the mirror of the soul. That the eyes reveal. You can read a lot about a person when you look into their eyes and you're able to see. You can have hard eyes or gentle eyes or eyes that seem deceitful.

[39 : 03] There are so many different things that the eyes reveal. But when you look into the eyes of Jesus when you look into his face you will see the beauty of his passion. You will see something of the wonder of his work.

his whole nature and character everything would be revealed as you look upon him. And you know it's something that will occupy your gaze throughout an endless eternity.

You will never ever ever tire of looking into the face of your saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. It will be an eternal delight to you and for you.

And then it tells us his name will be on their foreheads. Now this speaks of ownership. It's where God has put his name. You sign your name to what belongs to you.

You don't sign your name to something that doesn't belong to you. It's a mark of your ownership. And so that's what the Lord does. His name is on their foreheads.

[40 : 04] It's a mark of his ownership that you belong to him. You're stamped with a royal seal of approval written by the hand of God.

And of course this is God never will write on the forehead of his enemies. He will never put the mark of ownership on those who don't know him and don't like him and don't want him.

There will never be a lost soul wandering throughout eternity with the name of God on the forehead. No, never. The seal of approval the seal of ownership will be upon God's people.

And it won't be the seal of ownership in the sense of master and slave but rather the name the seal the name of ownership more like husband and wife.

It's a union of togetherness and love. When you go through the Bible you find this picture of Christ in the church. in the Old Testament it talks of these spousals and of course these spousals was like our engagement they were a little stronger and then it worked through as a church as a bride and Christ as a bridegroom and then we follow it all the way through and Christ as a bridegroom has loved the church the bride so much that he gave his life for it.

[41 : 33] Ephesians were told that this self-sacrificial love ought to be the way that husbands love their wives and then we're brought on into Revelation and we read about there the marriage supper of the Lamb Christ having the marriage supper with his church with the bride and then finally we read about the church becoming the Lamb's wife that's it's like the whole consummation of the marriage here now finally she's his wife and that's how it's going to be it's the ultimate love story and there there's this the great sign of it that we belong to the Lord and everything that happens here is preparation for what will be everything that's going on in your life in my life it's all preparation for what will be there's going to be new heavens and a new earth what they're going to be like I don't know to be personally it's not an area that I have given an awful lot of thought there's the odd day when you begin to maybe dream about it and think about this and that but at the moment what occupies your thinking is whose presence you're going to be in the Lord's and I also believe that tied into our full enjoyment of him will be our enjoyment of one another in him because the day you become a Christian you enter into a family we become family you're tied up with people that you didn't really know much about until you became a

Christian isn't that true you think about this where we are here in this town you think of the people that are that they're close to you now you might have known them in the past to say hello to that but now they're important in your life because they are part of your spiritual family you have a sense of kinship a sense of identity a sense of family it's unique this is what happens God brings us to himself he also unites us to one another and that'll be part of the wonder of glory let me ask one question in conclusion and you answer this yourself is this the future you're looking forward to or is this just all kind of alien to you is this kind of stuff and you're saying you know I never really thought about this well if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and if you have Jesus Christ as your

Lord then this is your future and if today you have to say well I don't then I would urge you that today you would make this your business because this is the most glorious future you want the best for yourself everybody wants the best for themselves while having the best for yourself now and in the future is having Jesus Christ an alternative ask Jesus to be your Lord your Saviour let us pray Lord we give thanks for for being able to reflect just for a little upon what the future is going to be like and just in the way that you've held it out for us and opened it to us bless us we pray and watch over us take away sin in Jesus name Amen we're going to conclude our service singing from Psalm 48 and sing Psalms Psalm 48 sing Psalms verse 9 Psalm 48 a we contemplate your steadfast love within your house O God for like your name your praise extends through all the earth abroad all that you do is righteous

Lord among Zion's joy is great in Judah's towns rejoice as they your judgments celebrate round Zion walk and count our towers view every citadel so that to children yet unborn her story you may tell for God the Lord who is our God forever will abide he is our God forever more to the end our guide we contemplate your steadfast love Lord within your house O God for like your name your praise extends through all the earth abroad all that you do your righteous

Lord mount Zion's joy is great and Judah's tongues rejoice as they your judgments celebrate round Zion walk and count our towers view every citadel so that to children yet unborn our story you may tell for God the Lord who is our God forever will abide he is our

[47 : 32] God forever more and to the end our guide now may the grace and mercy and peace of God the Father Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forever more Amen thank you very much for joining with us this morning and do join again this evening if you're able at 6.30 when the service then will be conducted by Reverend James McKeever