

THE KINGDOM OF GOD: GRACE AND GLORY

Taught by Don Maurer

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Heavenly Father, you are our God. You are the one, living and true God. O Triune God, you, who are Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You are God, and there is none other. There is none like you in all the earth, a God who forgives transgression and inequity and sin, but who by no means will clear the guilty. Father, we come before you this morning asking that you would, Lord, just enable us, Father, to be enriched by the study of your Word. Father, I pray that if I say anything, Lord, that is not of you, that it would be null and void, and only your truth, Lord, would shine. Father, we pray for our friend's son and daughter-in-law. This is very, very, very difficult indeed, Father. Lord, we pray for the doctors and nurses, that you would guide them. We pray for the specialists and everybody who is working, Father, that even though things are impossible with man, everything is possible with you, and we know, Lord, that you are able to take that cancer away. And so, Father, if it be your will, we pray that that would happen, that you would heal her of this stage three cancer, and that it would not return. Father, we also pray for our friend, that you would grant to him sleep, that you would grant to him that blessed gift, and Father, that he would find out whatever it is that's causing, that's hindering that. And now, Father, we pray that you would help us to study your Word and that you would guide us today. Through the Holy Spirit, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Last week, when Bruce asked me to teach on the kingdom of God, I gulped, and my initial reaction was, "What!?" I don't think I said it out loud, but in my heart, I certainly did. He said, "Well teach on the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory, which wasn't a whole lot different, but anyway, that's what I am assigned to do, and so by the grace of God, we will do it."

The kingdom of God, the kingdom of grace, the kingdom of glory. Let me just make some introductory remarks here as we go into God's Word today. Of course, I have Scriptures there for you, and I will be just asking someone to read, anybody that wants to read whenever we come to them, feel free.

Bill and I were talking the other day about this a little bit. I can't help but think that we Americans, whether we realize it or not, or are conscious of it or not, are all allergic to the concept of a king or a kingdom. It's such a foreign thing to us. After all, we rebelled against that in 1776. There are different opinions about that; I'm not going to get into it. It's something that we just can't identify with.

I think it was John Guest I heard a long time ago saying that it was very hard coming from England into America to talk to Americans about the concept of royalty or a king. There was something in the 19th century, there was soon as building or something, in Philadelphia I believe it was, that had the sign on it which said, "We serve no sovereign here." Well, I got news for you, folks. God, in the Old Testament, and Jesus Christ in particular, in the New, who we'll be focusing on today, is a king. He's the King of kings, the Supreme dictator. I know that when people think, "Oh no!" they're going to think of Hitler or Stalin or something like that. Well no, he's a benevolent dictator, but nevertheless, he is a dictator. He is sovereign. He is a King.

A Scripture that I do not have written down, that Bill pointed out to me, was a very good Scripture. Remember when Jesus was before Pilate in John 18, and Pilate said, "Are you a king?" Jesus said, "For this reason I was born, and for this cause I came into the world to testify to the truth." Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Would someone read the first two Scriptures on the handout—1 Timothy 1:17 and 1 Timothy 6:4-16?

Tom: "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." (1 Timothy 1:17) "...blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which

He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.” (1 Timothy 6:14-16)

Thank you, Tom. Boy, there is so much in there. This is our Jesus, folks. This is who we serve—our King, our Lord. Now, the Lord Jesus reigns, from heaven, and is King over the universe, right now. He is seated at God’s right hand. We celebrate the incarnation at Christmas time. We celebrate, or observe, his crucifixion. We celebrate his resurrection. There are probably, you Anglicans probably have a day, correct me if I’m wrong, but you probably have a day that you celebrate the Ascension as well. I know Roman Catholics do, too. The Ascension is very important. We dare not look over that.

In Psalm 110:1, we read the statement, “The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies Your footstool.”” Now that is the most quoted Old Testament passage in the New Testament. Jesus quotes it to the Pharisees, kind of confounding and confusing them. Peter quotes it. Hebrews, the book of Hebrews. An amazing passage.

I realize that in our day and age, a lot of people don’t think that God has enemies, but indeed he does, but this is what he is doing. He subdues his enemies. We were—we were his enemies. Never forget that. Now we have been adopted as sons into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is very, very important.

A lot of people will say, “Well okay, if Christ is truly reigning and ruling, why is the world still in such turmoil? Why is it in the mess that it’s in?” I’m not going to get into that right now, but the short answer is because at present, we don’t see everything made subject to Christ. We will. The second thing is that God’s patience according to 2 Peter 3 means salvation, and so people, he is bringing people every day into his kingdom, and will continue to do that until he comes again. That’s the short answer. To judge the living and the dead.

Do you realize that every knee, one day, shall bow? That every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord? For the glory of God the Father. Think of you will. Nero, Stalin, Hitler, all the presidents that we’ve had, Saddam Hussein, Osama Bin Laden, whoever you think of—they are all going to bow before Christ, either willingly and with joy, or as R. C. Sproull says, “because their knees will be broken and they will have no choice.” So let’s keep that mind, that Christ is now reigning and ruling at the right hand of God.

When speaking of the kingdom of grace and glory, those are terms that Bruce uses, we mean Christ’s particular and special ruling and reign over his people, over his church. That’s the kingdom of grace. By the kingdom of glory, we mean the blessed future of the redeemed. They’re not two separate kingdoms, but they’re one kingdom, with two parts or phases. If you’re truly in the kingdom of grace by faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance, you are positionally, and will be actually, in the kingdom of glory one day. You can’t enter the kingdom of glory unless you’re in the kingdom of grace. Remember what Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Unless you are born again, unless you are born from above, you cannot see or enter the kingdom of heaven.”

The transition between those two events, being in the kingdom of grace, the church and the kingdom of glory, is what we mean by the subject of eschatology or the study of the so-called end times. Of course, we have four basic positions that people debate about and throw bricks and everything. Not really. We have pre-mil, post-mil, a-mil, and then I have in parentheses pan-mil for those who can’t make up their mind, that it will all pan out in the end {LAUGHTER}, referring to the millennium and what that all means. I’m not going to get into that now, but I just would bring that to your attention.

That reminds me of a story. My Seeing Eye dog, my second Seeing Eye dog, one of his favorite dog foods was Meal Time. When he was hungry, he suffered, his position, his eschatological position was pre-meal (pre-trib) because it was tribulation of hunger. And then if he wasn't hungry, it was a-meal (no meal time for him). If he had eaten and was full, he was post-meal. So there you go. {LAUGHTER}

Moving right along. Let's go then to the kingdom of grace. The church. Now grace. I mean, can we think of a sweeter term in all of Scripture? Oh, what a blessed, blessed term. What is grace? What do we mean by grace?

Dale.: God's riches at Christ's expense.

Amen Dale. God's riches at Christ's expense. A very good way to remember it. God's unmerited favor, his undeserved mercy. And really, it started in the Garden of Eden, didn't it? When Adam and Eve sinned. Actually, creation is a gracious thing. But when Adam and Eve sinned, God had every right, and did say, "and the day that you eat of it, you shall die" (the forbidden fruit). But what does he do? He clothed them. A picture of imputed righteousness. A picture of justification. He clothed them with animal skins and promises the Redeemer. That's grace. We see it all throughout the Bible, and we see it in the kingdom of grace, or what Sig calls, the embassy of grace, the church.

We speak, and Bruce has talked about this before, we speak of the invisible church and the visible church. The invisible church is the church as God sees it. I'm going to read from what I consider to be a very fine document. My bias is showing here. The Westminster Confession of Faith.

Audience Member: Whoa.

Yes. Whoa. Yes. {LAUGHTER} It's on the church. This is what it says in the first section of chapter 25 about the invisible church, "The catholic, or universal church," and that's what the word catholic means; it means universal, worldwide, "The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are or shall be gathered into one under Christ the head thereof, and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of him that fills all in all." Now that's a mouthful, I know it is. It's all of the elect, all of the redeemed, from Adam to the last person to come into the kingdom before Christ comes back.

You notice the Westminster framers what they did there is they used some Scriptural terminology. The church is Christ's spouse, her bride. We see that over and over again in Scripture. The body of Christ. This shows, doesn't it, the unity of the church with the Lord Jesus Christ.

There was an article in Newsweek right before Easter. The title of the article, on the cover, was, "Forget the Church, Follow Jesus." Now that is an oxymoron. Of course, that's a statement, a contradictory statement. A lot of people have that kind of feeling today, don't they, particularly younger people who just think, "Well I can follow Jesus. I love Jesus, but I have no use for organized religion so-called. I have no use for the church." Like I said a year ago almost—it'll be a year ago Sunday actually, not that anybody cares—but when I observed that a lot of people on Sunday mornings like to attend the church of the inner springs, featuring pastorpedic, or the church of the sacred rest, or saint anesthesia. No, Christ and the church inseparable. What did Christ say he's going to say on his right hand at the last judgment who evidence their faith by their lives, "I was hungry, you gave me to eat. I was thirsty, you gave me a drink," etc. They'll say, "When?" And he says, "You did it to the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." That great affection, that closeness that Christ has, I mean, after all, he calls us his bride. What could be more close than that?

What does Christ say to the Apostle Paul whenever he is confronted by Christ, where he is persecuting

the believers? Does Christ say, "Saul. Saul. Why are you persecuting these people?" No, he says, "Saul. Saul. Why do you persecute Me?" To do an act of kindness to a brother is to do it to Christ. To hurt another brother, or to shun them, or do something that is not good, is to do it to Christ. That is the relationship that Christ has with his church. It's a blessed...they call it the mystical body of Christ. Indeed it is.

Then, of course, we also have the visible church; the church as man sees it. Let me again read from the Westminster Confession, "The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God," notice the Scriptural terms they use, "out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation," and let me emphasize the word "ordinary."

We know, I have a friend, I told you about him before, Johnny, who's a quadriplegic, can't attend church, fortunately has the Internet to watch the services live and everything. But my goodness, you couldn't find a more blessed individual who the Lord has just showered his love, and who loves the Lord in spite all of his physical infirmities.

This is the visible church. Now notice, it says that they "profess" the true religion. It doesn't mean necessarily that they all possess it, do they? This is the visible church. This is the church's [UNCLEAR], and we don't know the heart of anyone. It's a mixture of wheat and tares, or as John McArthur says, "It's a mixture between the saints and the aints." That's a good way to remember it that way.

Of course, the visible church, of course, has a lot of problems. We know that. The invisible church doesn't because it is a church that God sees it, but the visible church we know, fractured in many ways. All you have to do, of course, is go to your particular church, and we know what we mean, what that means, don't we? It's said if you find a perfect church, don't join it; you'll ruin it. But you need to be there, as Bruce has so eloquently said many times.

Now Christ, the King and Head of his church, loves and cares for and nourishes her. Would someone read Ephesians 5:25-27.

Audience Member: *"Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."*

The context of that is marriage; however, Paul makes a great distinction, or not distinction, but a similarity, a corollary between marriage, the bond of marriage and the bond of Christ and his church. Christ is the husband; we are the wife, the bride. How does Christ love the church? It says in that passage that Christ loves the church, cares for her. How does he do it? Anybody have any ideas?

Audience Member: *Sacrificially.*

Sacrificially. Boy, how many times has Bruce said that? Definitely. We are to mirror that in our lives. We don't do a very good job of it a lot of the time, but we are to mirror that. I'll be getting to that a little bit later, but yeah, sacrificially. How else? What are some concrete ways that you can think of that Christ loves the church?

Audience Member: *Being there when there are services going on.*

Yeah. He is with us, isn't he? He said that where two or three are gathered, and I realize that this is the

context of church discipline; however, I certainly don't think that he meant, "I'm not there any other time." Oh no. When we worship, he is there. He is there with us. What did he say to disciples, giving them the great commission? "Behold, I am with you always until the end of the age." That is a blessed, blessed comfort. Bill, be assured that he is with your daughter-in-law and your son, going through the trials that they're going through. That is a wonderful comfort and reassurance. Any other ways that you can think of?

***Audience Member:** Gave himself up for us.*

Gave himself up for us. Yeah. Totally. Unreservedly. It's been said that it was as if you were, individually, on his mind when he was on that cross. We all are familiar with the spiritual, *Were You There When They Crucified My Lord*. Well yes. In the mind of Christ, you, if you are one of his, certainly were. That is a great comfort and a wonderful thing to think about.

***Audience Member:** He gave us the Holy Spirit to dwell with us.*

Amen! Boy, isn't that a great thing. Isn't that wonderful. The promise of the Holy Spirit. Where would we be without the Holy Spirit? He says that, "I will give you the Comforter," or the Counselor, whatever your translation says, "to be with you, to be in you and to be with you forever." The Spirit of truth. Oh, what a blessed demonstration of Christ's love. Amen.

***Audience Member:** He personally does that. He personally baptizes each one of us, circumcises our hearts...*

Amen!

***Audience Member:** ...that we would then be conformed to him. He's very personally involved in each one of us.*

That is just so precious. Christ is not aloof, is he? He knows what it is like. I preached two weeks ago on the fact that Christ is the man of sorrows, and so he knows what it is like. He knows what keeps you up at night. He knows what it's like to cry. He knows what it's like to sweat. He knows what it's like to have sorrow upon sorrow because he experienced that for you and for me. That's just a precious, precious thing. Someone else had something to say about his Word?

***Sig:** He also gave us his Word. His living Word.*

Amen! And he gave us the Word written, he gave us the Word preached. He is the Word. That's right. He gave us the Word, preached, giving pastors, teachers. He gave us the sacraments. Some people call them ordinances. Some people call them sacraments—baptism and the Lord's Supper—visible signs of his love. And, a lot of people don't consider this very loving, but it nevertheless is, discipline. Right? Personal discipline. Corporate church discipline. Chastisement, which we'll get into in a little bit. And whatever he needs to do, he will do it so that we will be holy and conformed to him, even though it's not pleasant at the time, but painful. But afterward, whatever you're going through, whatever trials or whatever, they are designed for your good, and afterward, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Those are some of the ways. We could go into many other ways that Christ loves the church. Loves you. Loves all of you, individually and corporately.

Through Christ, we are citizens of his kingdom. There are three Scriptures there. Would someone like to read those for us.

Audience Member: Eph. 2:19-20, “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.”

Dale: Philippians 3:20-21, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.” (Philippians 3:20-21) “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” (1 Peter 2:9-10)

These are precious, precious Scriptures. We are citizens, beloved. Let’s not forget that. We are citizens of Christ’s kingdom first, and of this nation second. When there’s a conflict, guess who wins? Guess who must come first? The Lord Jesus Christ. We see that more and more in our day. We are citizens of his kingdom. Notice, particularly in that 1 Peter passage, the parallel here between this passage and Exodus 19:6, where God says this of the nation of Israel, his people of the Old Testament, and yet the same kind of thing applies even in a richer way here to the church.

I did not put this down. I wish I would have now, but citizens have privileges, don’t they? What are some of our privileges that we have as citizens of the kingdom of God?

Audience Member: *We’re co-heirs with Christ.*

Co-heirs with Christ. Boy, oh boy! Isn’t that something? We share in the victory. I’ll say a little bit about that at the end. We have all of the goods and riches and gifts of Christ. Undeserved, totally.

Audience Member: *Have heavenly access.*

Oh, isn’t that important. Isn’t that absolutely precious. In the Old Testament, you didn’t have that kind of access. You had access alright, but you had to perform sacrifices. You had to have the priests perform them, and he could only do that once a year. If there were things that you did wrong, you could die. But now we have total freedom of access, which we take so for granted, and beloved, I’m afraid a lot of time, we don’t even take advantage of as we should. That is a precious, precious thing. Boldness of access, freedom of access, to Christ. Anything else?

Audience member: *We have peace.*

We have peace. Yeah. Being justified by faith, we have peace through or Lord Jesus Christ, not as the world gives peace. Countries will come and they’ll sit down at the table and they’ll talk and then before you know it, they’re at war again. Not so the peace of Christ. It is eternal. It doesn’t go away. Oh yes, he will discipline us. He will chastise us as a father disciplines his children, but never, ever are we cast off. Christ said, “He who comes to me I will in no wise cast out.” The war is never renewed. We have peace. Eternal peace.

How about adoption? That’s something that we don’t think of too much, that we are adopted into his family. And we are, as I think the Westminster Confession puts it very well, protected, pitied, taken into the number, and chastised as by a father, but never cast off, and given the guarantee of the Holy Spirit to the day of redemption, sealed for the day of redemption.

How about fellowship with one another? Isn't that a wonderful thing? We, on Friday mornings, gathering together, and just being able to get to know one another. It doesn't matter whether you've known someone in Christ for 20 or 30 years, as I have known several people that long, or like Tin, the guy that we met a few years ago from Viet Nam. I knew, instantly, when I met him that he was my brother. That's the way it is in the body of Christ. It's something that is precious and wonderful. And of course, we are guaranteed, as I just said a couple minutes ago, to be in the kingdom of glory. Eternal life. That is just great.

Characteristics of kingdom citizens. I'll just go over this very quickly. I don't want to give away too much that Bruce has to say because he'll be talking about this and our study of the Sermon on the Mount, but poor in spirit. Poor in spirit means that we are totally, we have no claim upon God. We are hopeless. We are helpless. We have nothing for which to take credit. Nothing but our sin. We have nothing that we can give to God or any claim upon his mercy whatsoever. We are poor in spirit. We are bankrupt spiritually.

Audience Member: Spiritual beggars.

Spiritual beggars. Yes. Begging for bread that Christ gives to us in himself, the Bread of Life. That's a kingdom characteristic that we must have. All the Beatitudes. They're not all listed here, but Bruce will go over them for us.

We are to be holy. Positionally, we are holy. Positionally we are set apart. But we are to be holy in practice as well. Peter, in the book of 1 Peter says, "As he is holy, be holy in all of your conduct, for it is written, be holy for I am holy." To be the opposite of the world, not to conform to this world, which in very many ways, is unholy. If you read, for example, in 1 Corinthians 6, if you read in Ephesians 5 and other places, you'll see a lot of lists of practices in people who practice sin who will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. But we are to be different. We're to be sort of a different drummer, if you will. We are to be holy.

Another characteristic is we are persecuted. Jesus says, "Blessed are you who are persecuted for righteousness's sake, for yours is the kingdom of heaven." Every day, I subscribe to Cross Walk, and just about every day, they have an article somewhere in the world, particularly in Islamic or Communist countries, a people who go through unbelievable torture for the sake of Christ. Sometimes we say that we're persecuted because well somebody has a little jab at me or picked on me today or I didn't get the promotion that I should have gotten. That's nothing compared to what our brothers and sisters throughout the world are going through, what they have gone through, since the beginning of the church. Persecution. We cringe at that. We don't like it. But as I believe it was Justin Martyr said, that the, or it was Origen, one of those said that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. In Iran, I understand, which you won't hear in the media, is exploding. Christianity is exploding there, despite all of the persecution there. Same as China. It's absolutely a, truly a remarkable thing that that has happened and may God give us the grace to bear persecution if it should come our way.

Worship. Boy, characteristic of kingdom citizens. Worship. That 1 Peter passage, that you are set apart that you may proclaim the praises of him who brought you out of death into life. That is absolutely precious. When we gather on Sunday mornings, we are gathered as the people of God and we are to worship him. We're to worship him privately. We're to worship him corporately. It is a blessed, blessed privilege. So many people think, "Oh, I have to go to church again." I want to go! I don't know about you, but I want to be there, not only to be with my brothers and sisters in Christ, but to worship the Living God, which we are going to be doing...here should be a foretaste of heaven, and that we're going to be doing that, perfectly, there.

That's my segue into the kingdom of glory.

Audience Member: *Jesus, when he was a young boy, he disappeared from his parents for a bit, but then they finally found him. They said, "What were you doing?" He said, "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" I think that's the attitude we should have [UNCLEAR].*

You're absolutely right.

Audience Member: *Politically and also spiritually.*

Right. And of course, we fall short spiritually, don't we. But nevertheless that is a blessed, blessed thing to be able to worship him.

Now we go to the kingdom of glory. Beloved, the best is yet to come. As I said before, there have been quite a number of views about what happens between the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. The millennium, what does that mean. We have pre-mil, post-mil and a-mil, meaning no millennium in the literal sense of the word.

What all Christians can agree on is this; that first of all, we have what's called, what theologians have called the intermediate state. In other words, what happens between our death and the second coming, the resurrection of the saints, and the aints, as far as that goes. First of all, we have the account of the so-called good thief on the cross. Would someone read Luke 23:42-43.

Audience Member: *"Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'"*

Yeah. Some people say, "Well if anybody...surely somebody like that couldn't enter paradise." Well he did. It's been said there's...there was one person who entered, gives us hope, but only one mentioned, least we presume. Good thing to remember.

What about 2 Corinthians 5:8?

Audience Member: *"We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."*

Absent from the body, present with the Lord. Immediately upon our death, we enter into his presence.

Audience Member: *"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ... For I am hardpressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." Philippians 1:21, 23*

Yes, he was hardpressed between the two, whether to stay on earth and complete his task or to be with Christ. So it's better, far better, to be with Christ than it is to be here. It's good. It's better, but it's incomplete. It's better, but not best. I think we forget that sometimes. You hear all of these things sometimes on TV when celebrities die or something. Well, for example, John Cigna, the broadcaster, when he died, "Oh he's up in heaven now riding his motorcycle," or when Mayor O'Connor died, "Ah he's in heaven eating kielbasa sandwiches." Well, he doesn't have a body. I don't see how he could do that. The intermediate state is not the end-all and be-all. It's wonderful, but there's something even more wonderful. There's something that is yet to happen. I think that even we as believers forget that sometimes. We are looking forward to the eternal state, something that lasts forever and ever. And isn't that just so wonderful.

Think of the most blessed experience that you've had. I don't know, a good marriage. A vacation. I remember a vacation that I went on in 2003 when I went with my family to Jacksonville and we shared a condo together for a week. It was great. I'm a beach bum. I love the beach. Oh, boogie boarding and on the sand. The beautiful weather and going out to eat sometimes. And only I would think of this—the radio stations there were a lot better, too, than they are here. {LAUGHTER} But it came to an end. We had to come home and get back into the daily grind.

But you know what, the eternal state, we're not going to have to worry about that it's going to come to an end, because it aint. It isn't. Forever and ever we're going to be with our Lord, in glory. Can you fathom what that's going to be like? I can't.

Let's see some of the features that this consists of. Number one, the resurrection of the body. If you want read about that, read it in 1 Corinthians 15. Jesus said, "Because I live, you will live also." Of course, the book of Acts says there's a resurrection of both the saved and the unsaved, both the righteous and the wicked. But for us, a glorious resurrection. We will come out of our graves. Our bodies are just as important to God as our souls. Anything else, any other idea, is gnostic. It's not biblical at all. We're going to have glorified bodies that will be conformed as we read in that Philippians passage to Christ's glorious body. I don't know what that's all like. Will we eat? It won't be necessary, but Christ was able to. Will there be pleasures that we had when we were on earth? [UNCLEAR] something that exceeds what we have here on earth. A new heaven and a new earth (Isaiah 65:17ff, Revelation 21 and 22). Just unbelievable that we have that.

We have an inheritance than can neither fade, spoil or perish. 1 Peter 1 talks about that. Everything in this world wears out, whether it be computers or our bodies or whatever. But that heritage, that inheritance that we have will never spoil, it will never grow old, we will never be bored in whatever activity and worship we are engaged in. It'll just be better and better and better and better. As Jonathan Edwards says, "We will swimming in the ocean of God's love." That is just inconceivable, but it's real. As real as anything that you or I experience in this life.

Then we have no more tears. No more sorrow. No more death. No more crying or pain. I don't need to tell you what this world is like. It's the exact opposite. Oh, there are inklings of God's mercy. We have a mixture of happiness and tears as the Broadway song says, but there, complete utter joy. And that's not even the most important part. I kind of went in the opposite order of Revelation 21.

The thing that's the most important is God is going to be with us and we are going to be with him forever. Many people think in terms of heaven, "Well, I be with my loved ones there?" or "Will I be able to play perpetual rounds of golf or something?" They're such trivial things really. Now do I believe our loved ones, if they in Christ, are there? Yeah, I do. I believe there will be a fellowship that you...you think this is good. You aint seen nothing yet. But the most important thing that we are going to be with God, and he is going to dwell with us.

I believe it was Augustine, I think Ted Wood said something along those lines; it was maybe several years ago, where Augustine said that if you were to enter a situation where you had everything that you wanted this world could offer in abundance, and all the nice things, no more suffering or whatever, how would you feel? Would it be heaven or hell to you if Christ weren't there? Well, it would be hell, wouldn't it? Because that is what we're looking forward to. We looking forward to being with Christ, to be with God. What Adam and Eve were barred from. What the apostles longed for the night before Jesus' crucifixion, "Lord, show us the Father will be enough for us," that beatific vision as it's called. And Lou, if I just may say this, you and I, can you imagine what we're going to experience? Sight as it truly was meant to be. Amen! Glory! That's right.

And then finally worship, service and activity. We're not going to just sit around playing harps all day. There's nothing wrong with harps. I prefer organs or pianos myself. But no, there's going to be worship. There's going to be service. There's going to be activity. Revelation 7:15 says that we will serve him in his temple, and of course, the new heaven [UNCLEAR] going to be that temple day and night forever and ever. We're going to reign with him. I'm going to be a little facetious here, but what might that look like? Well Sig may give the announcements for the coming activities for the next millennium or something. {LAUGHTER} He'll be completely sanctified and everything will be fine then. And then if I might pick on Rich Clark over here. Serving part of the, maybe helping to serve part of the divine banquet. The only reason I say that is because of the great banquet he served a couple of months ago. And then Bill playing the guitar. Lou playing the saxophone or the piano. Ted talking with the Apostle Paul or Augustine or whatever.

***Audience Member:** Arguing.*

Arguing. Yeah. {LAUGHTER} I would also be...and there will be no losers or winners. Everybody will be right. I'd probably be in that category, too. Brothers, this real. This is what we are looking forward to. Of course, as the book of Hebrews says, "Since we're receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us worship God [UNCLEAR] with reverence and awe," some translations say reverence and fear, "for our God is a consuming fire. 1 Peter says, "What manner of people ought you to be." Eagerly waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

***Audience Member:** That all answers the question, the old song a few years back, [UNCLEAR] Peggy Lee who said...*

Is that all there is?

***Audience Member:** ...is that all there is?*

Right.

***Audience Member:** So frequently, that's the attitude of so many people. They enjoy it, but, "Is that it?"*

Praise God, no. It is not. The kingdom of grace, the kingdom of glory—we're there beloved because of the work of our Beloved King. Never forget that he is our King, the Lord Jesus Christ. And all God's people said...Amen!!!