

LIVE AT THE END:

GOSPEL ENCOURAGEMENT FROM REVELATION 7:13-17

(OR “ESCHATOLOGICAL, GOSPEL TRUTHS TO EMBRACE IF YOU WANT TO STAY FAITHFUL TO KING JESUS IN AN AGE OF MONSTER SECULAR STATES, SEDUCTIVE PAGANISM, RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION, HEARTRENDING SUFFERING, UNAVOIDABLE MORTALITY, AND OTHER GREAT TRIBULATIONAL REALITIES”)

BEFORE THE THRONE

(REVELATION 7:15)

I. The Centrality of the Blood

II. Bathed in the Blood

- A. Revelation 7 shows us the world after this present evil age is over: the Age to Come, God’s kingdom will fill the world.
- B. We will wear shimmering, white robes made white in the blood of the Lamb.
- C. We have been made pure, perfect, innocent, and sinless, because all our sins have been paid for by the sacrifice of God’s own Son.
- D. If we believe in the Lord Jesus, then all our sins are washed away by the blood of the Lamb.
- E. Even while we are still sinful, we are fully pleasing in God’s eyes, because the blood of the Lamb washes away all our guilt.
- F. The blood of the Lamb underwrites every good thing that God wants for us.

III. Before the Throne (Rev 7:15)

- A. Now that the blood of the Lamb has washed away our guilt, what happens next?
 - Rev 7:15: “Therefore they are 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.”
- B. “Therefore” indicates that being able to stand before the throne of God is a result of being washed in the blood of the Lamb.
—Because we have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, we can now stand “before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple...”

- C. Because of the blood of the Lamb, because the Lord Jesus has made the perfect payment for all our sins, we have been reconciled to God.
- D. Reconciliation with God entails two things.

IV. Presence

- A. First: *When we are reconciled to God, we get to make our home in his presence.*
- B. Before we were washed by the Lamb's blood, we were far away from the favor of God. Thanks to the atoning death of the Lord Jesus, God has turned his face toward us, wrapped us in the warmth of his holy love, and gives himself to us by allowing us to be with him, allowing us to have a share in him. He allows himself to be "our portion" (cf. Lam 3:24). He allows himself to be "possessed" by us, to be "had" by us.
- C. If we want to survive this present age, if we want to survive the darkness around us, the darkness that remains in us, we have to keep coming back to live in God's presence.
- D. What must we do if we want to keep our heads and survive this tribulation?
 1. We must remember that *in Christ* we are already home.
 - Eph 2:4-6: "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,"
 - Col 3:1: "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."
 2. We must remember that we can always come home to God today.
 - Heb 4:16: "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need"

V. Priesthood

- A. Second: *When we are reconciled to God, we become his priests—all of us.*
- B. The text says, "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple..."
- C. Under the Law covenant of Moses, only the men from the tribe of Levi could be priests. Now, under the New Covenant in Christ, every man, woman, and child can be a priest of God.
 - Rev 1:6: "and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

- D. We are called to live in the holy presence of God every moment of our lives, to pour out our love back to him through keeping his commandments and our good works.
1. Some key Scriptures:
 - 1 Cor 10:31: “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
 - Col 3:17: “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”
 - Col 3:22-24: “Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.
²³Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”
 2. We are to love God through everything that we do.
- E. In one sense, we are already in Revelation 7:15. We are already beginning to know what it means to stand “before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple” (v 15).
- F. Priestly encouragement for...
1. Those who are young.
 2. Those who have failed.
- G. In Christ, you are a royal priest of the living God over whom God rejoices.
- 1 Pet 2:9: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”
 - Isa 62:5: “For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.”
- You must let no one—*including yourself*—tell you differently. God’s love for you never changes. You are his. And if you want to offer your actions more and more to God as offerings of love, you need to rest more and more in this fact.

VI. Prayer and Scripture

- A. How can we possibly love God in difficult, even evil settings?
- B. God truly understands the gravity of our individual sufferings.
- C. He has given us a small gift to help us latch on to his presence wherever we are—the gift of *prayer* and *Scripture*.

- D. If you want to grow in the awareness of God's presence, set small times for prayer and Scripture throughout the day. Think of these times of prayer as checking in with the Father, calling home.
1. Practice suggestions:
 - a. Start with the Lord's Prayer once in the morning and once in the night.
 - b. Choose a few Psalms to be your base camp (Pss 16, 23, 51, 70, 95, 136, and 145).
 2. It isn't so much the length that counts but the relationship that you are nurturing. But as the relationship grows, you naturally want to spend more time in prayer.
—God is interested in the real you. And he already loves the real you in Jesus Christ.
- E. What would happen if we were in the habit of raising prayer to God every moment of our work day? We sanctify our work. We sanctify ourselves in our workday. We infuse holiness into the ordinary, mundane tasks that the Father has given us to do. We will experience a new reverence for God in our tasks. We will experience a deep sense of gratitude for all the love that we have already received. We will make sure our tasks help our fellow human beings, whom God also loves.

VII. Stay Home

If we desire to stand firm in the Lord, if we want to protect and nurture our love for the Lord in the face of all the evil that this great tribulation will throw at us, then we need to stay home. We need to believe that we have been reconciled to God himself through the blood of the Lamb. We are God's priests. We are God's beloved ones. He loves us. He has chosen us for himself, paid off our debts, and brought us home. So let us stay home in him always. Don't leave. Stay home in Jesus.

Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything that you disagree with or found difficult to accept?
3. Based on Rev 7:15, what truth must we accept if we want to grow in the Lord during this great tribulation?
4. Now that we have been washed by the blood of the Lamb, what can we do? How can we relate to God?
5. You are a priest of God, a royal child in God's house. How does that strike you? How does that speak to your present life situation, your trials? Does it inspire you? What does it make you want to do?
6. If you wish, you could use Ps 16, 23, 51, 70, 95, 136, and 145 as your prayers. Pray through them for a month to establish the habit of prayerful reading of Scripture. Preferably, pray aloud.

"However many blessings we expect from God, His infinite liberality will always exceed all our wishes and our thoughts"

John Calvin

*Come early to prepare yourselves for Worship and the hearing of God's Word. Punctuality honors God.
Switch off mobile phones or put them on silent mode. We are meeting with God.*