All Things New — Delivery Transcript

Revelation 21:1–10 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, November 20, 2022 · *The Returning King*

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All right, great singing by our worship team. You guys were doing a great job singing back there. I could even hear you in the left ear and the right ear. Usually it's just this left side that sings, but I heard this side over here this morning as well. So kudos to you guys. I'm halfway joking. But it is so encouraging when you can hear the bride of Christ at church singing to one another. These songs that we sing, I think most of us know the— wasn't it one new song this morning?

But most of us know most of the lyrics of the songs and it can become familiar to the point that the lyrics no longer minister to your heart. Too much familiarity breeds contempt, as they say. But when familiar words are sung to you, when you hear them sung by someone else, the Holy Spirit does something special, I believe, and kind of quickens your heart and encourages you in a special way. And so I hope that when you come on Sunday mornings that you don't just listen to the band, as nice as they are in their singing and their musical powers, musical skills, not musical powers.

They might have musical powers, I don't know. But you sing. You have an instrument. It is your voice, and you bring glory to the Lord through worship. If you have a Bible, we're going to be in Revelation chapter twenty-one this morning as we keep moving forward in our journey through this great book of the Bible. And we're getting close to the end, and now we're at Revelation 21, so there's only two chapters left, and I have what I hope will be an encouraging message for you this morning. It's entitled "All Things New."

And I don't know if you're like everybody else, but typically when you enter into a new relationship or if you're starting a new season of life, new job, college, new kid in the house,

whatever the case may be, inevitably you develop expectations, right? How many of you had expectations going into your marriage? Can you raise your hand? Can we all be honest? Okay, most of us have expectations going into our marriage. And then you go to a premarital counselor and he says, stop that, right? He says you shouldn't be doing that right now.

Or he tries to clarify unreasonable expectations and things of that nature. But you just can't help but have expectations when you say, I'm going to give my life to this person. We're going to have X, Y, and Z kind of dreamy thing every day. And then those expectations, if you're not careful, especially if they're unrealistic, are not met. And what happens with unmet expectations is you get disappointed or angry or flat out, you know, unruly. And the same is true not just in marriage. It's true when we had our first child Blaze, I had expectations of what it was going to be like to be a dad.

Some of those expectations were met, some of those expectations were infinitely beyond what I was imagining, and some of those expectations were not what I thought they were going to be. You know, you can't help but be a little bit disappointed when what you think is going to be isn't. I had a friend who used to say, people don't let us down, our expectations of people let us down. And I think there's a lot of truth to that. Well, just like you have expectations in new relationships and new seasons of life, I think if you're a believer, if you're a Christian, you have expectations of what heaven is going to be like.

People talk about how you can't imagine; it'll be vastly infinitely beyond what we can imagine. But it doesn't stop people from thinking about it and it shouldn't stop you from thinking about it. How many of you have heard the song by Bart Millard, "I Can Only Imagine"? Probably all of us, right? It's a classic best seller sung at so many different funerals and different venues. In that song he imagines what it will be like on that day when we see Jesus face to face. That's what Revelation 21 is about. It's about heaven.

Now it's heaven come down to earth. Some believe it's a continuation of the millennial reign of Jesus, which we have been talking about over the last three weeks. Whatever it is, it will be infinitely beyond what we expect it to be. Because when Jesus comes, when heaven falls down, when heaven meets earth, Jesus is not just going to make some things better. He's actually going to make all things new. What we're going to see in our passage is that this world and the things of this world are actually going to pass away.

They will disappear. They will dissolve in the heat death. And all things will be made new. Just as Genesis 1, God created the heavens and the earth, and he said that it was good. Sin came into the world and disrupted that good design, but when Jesus comes again there will be a recreation all things new again, and incorruptible this time around. If you've been journeying with us through the book of Revelation, we know in chapter twenty we saw the return of Christ, the millennial reign of Jesus. We looked at the debate that rages around that topic.

We saw the binding of Satan, the ruling and reigning of the saints, and then finally the loosing of Satan and a final crushing of his rebellion. Last week Taylor preached a message on the great white throne judgment, a great message and reality that one day we will all stand before the throne of God's grace and we will give an account on that day of judgment for every idle word that we have spoken, everything that we have ever said or done that is violative of God's design, and also receive the just penalty for that.

Those who have their names written in the book of life will spend eternity with God in heaven, and those who do not will be cast into the lake of fire. A very sobering passage. That is then brought into Revelation 21, which is where we're going to be today, starting in verse 1. In it, John says, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.

Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look"—or behold—"God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away." It's an encouraging passage, is it not? I've heard this passage read many times at different funerals, but oftentimes during a funeral message, you don't have time to really bring out the context of what's going on in the book of Revelation.

When John says, I saw a new heavens and a new earth, it probably shouldn't be very surprising to us because if you've been journeying through the book of Revelation, you know that this earth and the first heavens and the first earth has been utterly destroyed by the judgments of God and the wickedness of men. We saw this all the way back in Revelation six with the seal judgments being unleashed and great wickedness taking place on the earth, and then the trumpet judgments burning up the dry grass and the freshwater and the sea water all being kind of poisoned and great disasters from the skies falling down and hitting the earth.

And then what the trumpet judgments didn't finish, the bowl judgments did. We saw in Revelation 15 and 16 these cosmic, cataclysmic judgments of God that absolutely destroyed this world that we call home. So to say that there's a new heaven and a new earth is not very surprising, but what will that new heavens and new earth look like is the real theme of this message. And so I want us to look at seven things of the new heavens and the new earth expectations, you might say, heavenly expectations that we can carry forward as we think about heaven, and then we'll close with some application of what that should mean for us as we live our life in this world.

The first expectation is that this old world or that the old things will pass away. I don't want to skip over that. I think we read it and we just kind of assume, yes, this world will be destroyed. But how will this world be destroyed, and why, I think is an interesting question. John just says, I saw a new heaven, the first passed away. There are other passages in the New Testament that talk about how the first earth and the first heavens will pass away. Second Peter chapter 3 in particular says that because of that day, talking about the return of Christ, "the heavens will be dissolved with fire."

And when they talk about heavens, a lot of times they're talking about the cosmos. So the cosmos will be dissolved with fire, "and the elements"—I think that's talking about this creation, the elements we see in our world—"will melt with heat. But based on his promise"—the Lord's promise—"we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness dwells." It's interesting when you talk to cosmologists or climate scientists. They always talk about climate change and global warming used to be the thing that they would say. And I know that many people, especially people in West Texas, look at that enterprise with some degree of suspicion, and, you know, rightly so in some respects.

But you don't have to be a cosmologist or climate scientist to know that the world is going to heat up to the point that it eventually burns up, and it's exactly what Peter says, it's exactly what John says, this is exactly what Jesus says is going to happen. That this world is on a course and the course that we are on is an unsustainable course. And there will come a day when it will just be too late and this universe will burn up in a heat death. And we can make all the changes that we want to make and pass all the legislation that we want to pass, but at the end of the day, it will not be sufficient.

Our earth is on a collision course with judgment day. Now when that happens, people debate the timing, as we obviously see in our world today, people debate the timing of that kind of thing, and then theologically there are in-house debates on does this happen after the thousand year reign of Jesus on the earth? Does this happen congruent with the thousand year reign of Jesus? Like when Jesus returns, does he burn up the earth or does he return, rule for a thousand years, and then burn up the earth. People debate that issue.

To me, Revelation 21 makes more sense if it's congruent with chapter 20, so that when Jesus returns, that whole judgment day, that whole thing kind of destroys what is, so that then Jesus can recreate what's new, and so it's congruent with chapter 20. But however you break down the particulars and however you do the debate, the reality is this world's passing away. And if this world's passing away, we ought to hold loose the things of this world. As John said in First John chapter 2, don't love the world. Don't get too overly invested in the world or the things of the world, because the world with its lusts is passing away.

He talks about the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, these things that hook us in a snare, pull us down, take up all of our attention. We spend all of our days

worrying about and concerned about things that are of this world, when this world at the end of the day is temporary, it's passing away. But the one who does the will of God abides forever. The creation groans, Romans 8 says, for the day that God's people will be resurrected and God's adopted sons will be glorified, because in their glorification so also will come the glorification of this world.

Just like ashes— I don't know if you've ever kind of burnt down— if you've got land, you burn down all of your land, burn down all the mesquite trees, burn down all the vegetation, and out of the ash of all of that destruction, new life can be born. It's kind of like a fertilizer. Ash can be somewhat of a fertilizer, and that's what will happen with this creation when the world is burnt up. There will spring forth new life by God's design and creative power when Jesus comes again. So the old will pass away.

Secondly, the new will come. The new will come. Now, when it says that all things will become new, it's an interesting thought experiment. If you go back to Genesis chapter 1, you obviously see God created this world, he created it good. Genesis chapter 3, Adam and Eve sin against God, they take from the tree the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And when they do, they introduce sin into the world. It separates them from their communion with their Creator, God, but it also brings about a curse on the ground.

In fact, people talk about three curses in Genesis 3. There's not three curses. The man's not cursed and the woman's not cursed. They have consequences, but not a curse. The only thing that's cursed in Genesis 3 is the ground. It's the physical creation. Genesis chapter 3, verse 17 says, "The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of painful labor all the days of your life." And all the farmers said, Amen. I was going to Roby yesterday; we were looking at the cotton crop. Absolutely terrible.

I mean terrible. Except for the people who had irrigation systems. Theirs was awesome. But everyone else was just terrible. Thorns and thistles, Genesis 3 says, is what will characterize the earth. But when all things are made new, that curse will be lifted. You guys remember the old Christmas hymn? Oh, how do the lyrics go? "No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; he comes to make his"—you guys remember—"blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found."

Oh, it sounds like you're cussing when you're singing that song, "far as," but you're not really cursing. You're just talking good theology. That's what's going to happen when Jesus comes again. The old will pass away. All things will be made new. Wherever the curse inflicted pain and suffering and thorns and thistles and we had to be productive by the sweat of our brow. We had to work 60 years just so we could retire and enjoy five or six years of our retirement all by the sweat of our brow, that will not be characteristic of the new creation.

It will be better. Greener grass, browner dirt, clearer air, all things will be new. The third thing that we see that we can expect when heaven comes down is that our chaos will be brought into order. I don't know if you noticed this, but in chapter 21, verse 1, at the very end, it says that the sea will be no more. It's one of six no-mores in Revelation 21. No more sea, no more tears, no more death, no more grief, no more crying, and no more pain. That's a lot of no-mores.

In fact, so much of how the Bible describes heaven is not in positive descriptions as much as it is in negation of what will not be present when heaven comes down. And one of the things that won't be present is the sea. Now there are people who make much of this and say, well there'll be no oceans in the new heavens and the new earth. And all the surfers said, oh man, you know, and I don't know if there will be literally no oceans. If you take this literally at face value, then I suppose yes, there's no oceans, no salt water, these big oceans that separate us from one another, separate US from Russia and China, maybe those things will no longer exist.

Maybe there will be bigger greater lakes, you know, and you can surf the waves on the lakes. I have no idea. But just maybe it's not so much a literal reference to the lack of an ocean as it is a symbolic reference to the chaos of this world being brought into order. Jordan Peterson wrote a best-selling book, *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos*,[1] in which he tries to present rules that you can apply to your life to bring order to the chaos that is in each one of us if we're left unrestrained for too long.

That's the kind of dynamic that we're talking about here. When you look at the sea in the Old Testament or New Testament, the sea oftentimes is symbolic of chaos. It's symbolic of satanic evil; sometimes it's symbolic of ruthless authoritarian governments. You go back to the Old Testament in Daniel 7 when the beasts came up out of the ground— they didn't come up out of the ground, they came up out of the sea. Those beasts from Daniel 7 are exactly what John sees in Revelation 13 when we talk about this beast antichrist figure who has this ruthless authoritarian administration that persecutes Christians and brings great difficulty on the earth.

He comes up out of the sea. Revelation chapter 13 verse 1. All of these passages talk about Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh, these godless rulers in the Old Testament, and liken them to the Leviathan— that's a sea monster. The same thing happens in the book of Job, in the book of Ezekiel. The sea throughout the Old Testament and New Testament is symbolic of chaos and division and disorder, and all of those things will be absent in the new creation. Our chaos will be brought into order. And not only that, the manifest presence of God will fill the earth.

So the chaos is lifted and God's presence descends. And we're not talking about his presence like he's present today. Theologians talk about the omnipresence of God, meaning that God

is equally present in all places and all times, because he's God, he's the Creator, he can be everywhere. We're not talking about omnipresence, we're talking about the manifest presence. And the manifest presence of God is different than his omnipresence. You see this in the Old Testament when God shows up in front of Moses in the burning bush. You guys remember this? The manifest presence of God.

It changed Moses' life. He had to put a veil over his face because his face was so shiny from the experience. In the Old Testament the manifest presence of God was in the ark of the covenant, when the people of Israel would wander through the wilderness, and then they entered into the promised land. They had the ark of the covenant with the Ten Commandments, and the manifest, the Shekinah glory would dwell in that place. And then they build the temple, of course. Solomon builds the temple, and where does the manifest presence of God dwell in the temple?

It dwells in the Holy of Holies. The curtain separated the holy place, and only the high priest could go in there, and only once a year. And that all changed in the New Testament because the presence of God was no longer located in a place. It was now going to be located in a person. The person of Jesus Christ was full of grace and truth. In him the fullness of God was pleased to dwell bodily. On the Mount of Transfiguration, they saw the glory of God shine in the person of Jesus Christ.

He was the temple. He said, "You can destroy the temple and I'll raise it up again in three days," because the glory of God isn't there. It's here. The manifest, the Shekinah glory was in Jesus. But then Jesus died. And when he died, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom. The presence of God isn't in there. Now that Jesus is absent, where's the presence of God? Well, he sent the Holy Spirit, and now the presence of God, the Shekinah glory of the Lord, is in the church.

And you can experience the manifest presence of God oftentimes when the church gathers together for worship and God shows up in a special way. Maybe in your own life, there's been occasions because of the Holy Spirit of God dwelling in your heart by faith where in a personal quiet time or in just some unhurried, undistracted time alone with the Lord, the manifest presence of God begins to fall, and you are so consumed by it. You can't do anything except fall on your face and recognize that God is God and you're not.

That his grace is greater than all of your sin, and it can be an overwhelming, powerful experience. It's happened in my life on a handful of occasions. Maybe you have occasions where it's happened to you, but this is not Old Testament kind of glory. This is not in the person of Jesus as in flesh kind of glory. This is not Holy Spirit in the church kind of glory. This is the presence of God that will outshine all other forms of God's presence that has ever come before it. Because God, in Revelation, who is dwelling in the temple in heaven, that heavenly tabernacle is going to descend.

It's going to touch the earth, and the glory of God and the presence, the manifest presence of God is going to fill this earth like water used to fill the oceans. In fact, you keep going on in Revelation 22, you realize this new creation doesn't even have a sun in its solar system because the glory of the Lord is its sun. The presence of God, bright light, shines up everything that there is. Darkness flees because of the presence of God. His witness, if you're taking notes, his witness on that day will outshine any other kind of witness that came before it.

So the old will pass away, all things will be new, chaos will be brought into order, and God's manifest presence will fill the earth. Expectation number five, death will be destroyed. And expectation six, our suffering will cease. Death will be vanquished. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And death— death will be no more. People cry for all kinds of reasons. If you've got little kids in your home, they cry for the weirdest reasons, right? I'm like, What is going on? The Lord gave me a daughter so I could learn how females act.

And I'm learning. But people cry for all kind of reasons. Boys too, by the way, it's not just girls. They cry for silly reasons. But nothing causes tears quite like death. It takes the hardest of men, causes them to melt. And there are occasions where death invades our ranks unexpectedly, with great injustice. Taking people from our perspective before their time, taking people that we love in ways that are violent and cruel. And it creates a hole in your heart, and that hole is so deep it feels like nothing else will ever fill it again.

That's the kind of pain that is absent in this new creation. He'll wipe away every tear because death will be no more. Isaiah chapter 65 talks about it as a prophetic utterance before Jesus even came to the earth. There were these prophetic visions that when Messiah comes, he's going to remove this enemy from our lives. Notice the similarities between Isaiah 65, verse 17, and Revelation 21, verse 1. This is the Lord speaking: "For I will create new heavens and a new earth; the past events will not be remembered or come to mind."

So those grieving memories that every time you think about them, they absolutely bring you down to a sense of nothing. Those things will somehow be lifted and erased. And not just that you forget about them, but that they somehow become untrue as Tolkien poetically said. "Then be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I will create Jerusalem to be a joy and its people to be a delight. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people. The sound of weeping and crying will no longer be heard in her.

In her, a nursing infant will no longer live only a few days, or an old man not live out his days. Indeed, the one who dies at a hundred years old will be mourned as a young man, and the one who misses a hundred years will be considered cursed." Isn't that interesting? Premature deaths of infants no more. And those old inconvenient deaths when people become a hundred years old and shrivel up and become a shell of who they used to be. Those

will be no more. If someone doesn't make it past a hundred years, they'll be considered cursed.

That's why some people say this is a reference to the millennial reign of Jesus on the earth, because those who are not in Christ are dying, but even at a very older age because of the glory of the Lord recreating the earth as it was originally meant to be. Death will be destroyed. Look at Isaiah chapter 25: "When he has swallowed up death once and for all, the Lord God will wipe away the tears from every face and remove his people's disgrace from the whole earth, for the Lord has spoken."

Death will be no more. And I don't know the particulars of how that's going to look. I believe we'll have physical bodies, but those bodies will be incorruptible. They will not be prone to decay like our earthly bodies are in this world. They will be invincible. And not only will death be vanquished, but our sufferings will cease. These ideas of every tear being wiped, no more grieving, no more pain, no more misery that we experience in this world. And it's not just the physical pain that we feel, but the emotional pain that's associated with the brokenness of this world, the brokenness of our relationships, the enmity between you and your prodigal children or the brokenness in your marriage, the stress and anxiety you feel because of the brokenness of your finances, the seeming weight that you can't get off your shoulders because of the brokenness in your workplace.

All of those things will cease. Suffering will cease. And those unanswered questions that you ask in this world, like why God, why there, why now, why this way? Those answers will be given. And maybe the answers to those questions won't be necessarily what you expect them to be, but you'll begin to see your suffering from a different perspective. You'll be able to see it from God's perspective, that eternal perspective. And when you see that, that suffering you experience will be swallowed up. Just like when a mother is giving birth to a child and the pain of that childbirth is overwhelming.

It's the worst thing they've ever experienced. But as soon as that baby is given to them, something changes. Maybe not in that immediate moment, but they eventually forget just how bad the childbirth was. Otherwise they wouldn't have any more babies. The joy of that new reality swallows it up, makes it go away somehow. It's still there. It still happened. It's not as if it didn't happen. But somehow the joy of the glory of this new thing that God will bring about in the world will swallow it up and you will feel it no more.

Your suffering will cease. The old is gone, the new has come, order brought to chaos, the presence of God filling the earth, death is vanquished, and our sufferings will cease. These are expectations we can carry into the future heaven. Finally, the New Jerusalem, God's holy city, will descend from heaven and shine like the sun. Look at verse 2: "I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband." If you skip down to verse 9, he fills it out a little more.

He says one of the seven angels "who had held the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came and spoke with me: 'Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.'" That's talking about us, the church. And then he carried me away in the spirit to a great high mountain, and he showed me the new Jerusalem, the holy city coming down out of heaven from God. I don't know if you're noticing this, but John seems to be mixing his metaphors. He's talking about new heavens, new earth.

He's talking about New Jerusalem. He's talking about a holy city. He's talking about a bride, the wife of the Lamb. Is he talking about three or four different things, or is he talking about one thing from different perspectives? That's an interpretive question you have to answer. I think he's talking about one thing from different perspectives, different points of view, and that is this new heavenly reality that is in heaven right now, that's going to descend, and when it touches the earth, it's going to fill it. Now, what is that reality?

Well, if you think about what we've already seen in the book of Revelation, we've already seen another city. Not God's city, but the city of the beast. You guys remember this? Revelation chapter— chapter 17. You remember the name of the city? Starts with a B, rhymes with Avalon. That's right. There you go. You got it. Mystery Babylon, the city of the beast. And the city of the beast wasn't described as a bride. How was she described? As a harlot. The mother of all harlots was written on her head. I did a little Google search of a comparison between the beast city and God's city.

We're not going to go through it, but you can see it's quite the contrast. And so everything that the city of the beast was, I think heaven will be, but without the brokenness, without the sin, without all of that trash. And so what is heaven? Heaven is not clouds. Heaven is not floating around playing a harp in a diaper, like sometimes we see on the cards. Heaven is a city. Heaven is like earth, but without brokenness, without misery. It's greener grass, browner dirt, clearer air, better economy, godly politicians. One: Jesus, the best president.

All of the brokenness and decay that we experience in this world will be gone, and everything that we wished this world could be will be present. That's God's city. And so God's city is a place. It's not just a people. There are scholars who will say this is just talking about the church coming down from heaven. It is a people, but it's also a place. It's not just a people. It's a place. Streets of gold. However you want to describe it. There's all kinds of different books that you can study on it.

God is preparing us a place. It's exactly the city that Abraham looked forward to. If you're taking notes. I think the reason he calls it the New Jerusalem is because it's delivering where the old Jerusalem could not. The old Jerusalem was a literal city with a literal temple in which the literal presence of God dwelled, but it was partial, it was incomplete, it was sin stricken, it wasn't enough. But the new Jerusalem delivers where the old Jerusalem failed.

So it's a better city. It's the city that Abraham looks forward to, a city that has foundations, a city whose architect and builder is God Himself.

And when God builds a city, unlike when man builds a city, God builds it the right way and it's glorious. This is the city that I think Jesus is talking about in John 14, that when I go away, I'm going to go away and prepare a place for you. John 14, verses 2 and 3: "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you. If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also."

Heaven is a place. It's a place. It's not an idea, it's not a mental space, it's a literal place. But it's not just a place. We also see heaven is also a person. Heaven is a place prepared, but it's also a people prepared for communion with a person. It's a destination to which we will one day arrive, a glorious destination, but it's also a sweet communion in which we will eternally abide. The presence of Jesus, the lover and maker of our souls. We will commune with him. We will be with him.

We will experience his presence in our life and in our world in ways that we've never experienced it before. Heaven is a place. Heaven is a person. That person is Jesus. It's the fulfillment of everything that we long for in this day and age. When you think about the work of God, what is God doing in the world? Well, he's making me holy, he's making me new, he's helping me overcome troubles, but he's not just building in here. He's also building out there, he's building a place, and he's preparing you for a person, and that person is Jesus.

That's what heaven is. Finally, the passage closes with a warning and an invitation. The warning is in verse 5. "Then the one seated on the throne said, 'Look, I am making everything new.' He also said, 'Write, because these words are faithful and true.'" In other words, you can take them to the bank. "Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life. The one who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be my son.'" "But the cowards"—something else.

So you see the contrast? You got the conquerors and you've got the cowards. The conquerors are given an invitation, just like they were given an invitation in Genesis— or in Revelation 2 and 3. "To the one who overcomes, you'll eat from the tree of life." To the one who overcomes, your name will be written in the book of life. To the one who overcomes X, Y, and Z. What is the inheritance? It's everything we've been talking about. It's a new heavens, a new earth. The old is gone, the new has come, God is present, chaos is brought into order.

That's our inheritance. That's what's given. That's what we— if we overcome, if we persevere to the end, that's what we receive. But notice, it's only given to the thirsty. To the thirsty I will give streams of living water. One of the things you need to know, especially if you're new

to church and you're not a Christian. The way the Christian life works, the way you get into the Christian life is by acknowledging your thirst. By admitting, I can't save myself. I can't bring this heaven. I can't create heaven. As hard as I try, I'm not sufficient.

I hunger and I thirst for a righteousness that is not in me but outside of me and it's located in the person of Jesus. To the thirsty I'll give. So if you're here this morning and you're not a Christian, the first step of getting into the Christian life is admitting I need you. I need Christ. I'm thirsty. I cannot save myself. And when you admit that and you put your faith and your hope and your trust in Jesus as Lord, God will save you. He will quench that thirst with the presence of his Son through the Holy Spirit.

But if you reject that offer, there's another fate that awaits. It's in verse 8: "But the cowards, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars—their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." Sometimes I wonder why when we have these vice lists they keep going on and on and on and on and on and on. I think it's just so they can get everybody in the room. All right. So if you were not a sorcerer, which I don't know, maybe some of these others fit the bill.

The reality is we're all sinners. Some of us have strongholds in our life that maybe match sexual immorality more than they do murdering or things of that nature, but the reality is we're all there. I think who this is talking about really is professing Christians who didn't possess real faith. You see it in Revelation 2 and 3, the church is full of two types of people. There's those who overcome, and then there's those who don't. Those who say they love Jesus and prove it with their works, not that their works save them, but their works validate their true saving faith.

And then there are those who say they love Jesus, they say they have faith, but they don't, and it's proven by their fruit. And so when the antichrist rises and he says, take the mark or die, the cowards say, give me the mark. When the going gets tough, these are the people who say, I don't really think Jesus was what I thought he was. Maybe I'm not really a Christian. Or I'm not one of those kind of Christians. I'm not a sold-out, believe-the-Bible, all-in-on-Jesus kind of Christian. It's just kind of like a cultural Christianity.

That's not sufficient. That won't save you. That will condemn you, along with everyone else who's characterized by that faith. Reminds me of the vice list in 1 Corinthians chapter 6. Different lists, same idea. "The unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom. Don't be deceived: No sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, or males who have sex with males"—it's talking about the active and passive members of sexual intercourse with the same sex—"no thieves, greedy people, drunkards, verbally abusive people"—notice, husbands, not just physical abuse; verbal abuse counts—"or swindlers." those people don't go to heaven because those people are sinful.

And again, we look at the list and say, well, at least there's one on there that I'm probably guilty of. But notice what Paul says. "Such were some of you." You used to be like this, "but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." That's the way to be an overcomer. It's not by trying with all of your willpower to stop being a coward and to be more full of faith. It's by recognizing you cannot save yourself and throwing yourself on the mercy of Jesus Christ as Lord and choosing for the rest of your life to treasure him above the things of this world.

To rely on him and to put your chips in with him instead of this world and the things of this world. And even when it's difficult, and even when it's costly, and even when it's going to mean losing things that you love in this world. You choose that path anyway because you're living not for this world but for the world that is to come. The city that has foundations, whose builder is God himself. And that's the invitation for us this morning. So as we enter into a time of response, I think the Holy Spirit in your heart is already bringing to mind maybe attitudes or actions or things that you know grieve the heart of God and separate you from being characterized by the life of an overcomer, by a conqueror.

It could be a besetting sin in your life that you can't seem to get over. It could be a sense of apathy about spiritual things, and maybe you're more tied up into this world system than you are the age that is to come. So you have an opportunity this morning as Taylor leads us through a time of response to repent and to put your faith in Jesus and to ask him to renew in you a vision for what is to come to have your life characterized by an overcomer. God can do what you can't do, but you've got to admit where you can't and ask him to do what only he can do.

You may be here this morning and you're not a believer, you're not a Christian, and the Holy Spirit's convicting your heart that if you were to stand before God on the day of judgment, you wouldn't be ready. Because your life is characterized by faithlessness, idolatry. Maybe the reason you haven't professed faith is because of cowardice. You're afraid of what people are going to think. You're afraid of what you might lose. And so it's a day of choosing for you. The Holy Spirit's calling you to repent of sin and put your faith in Jesus.

And you have an opportunity to do that. I'll be here down at the front. If you want to make a public decision, you can do that. There's also going to be a QR code up on the screen that you can scan if you want to have more of a conversation about what that looks like. Maybe you have some intellectual doubts and challenges to taking that step of faith and we'd be happy to talk with you about those things. If you have any kind of prayer requests, any kind of next step, you can scan that QR code or come down to the front.

Father, we thank you for this time. We pray as we respond that we would respond as people who truly are shaped by the vision of what's to come. People say you can be so heavenly minded that you're no earthly good. We don't want to be that. But we do want to be so

heavenly minded that we are of earthly good, that we live in this world as citizens of the world that is to come. That we're more loving, we're more sacrificial, we're more generous, we're more filled with hope and optimism because we know even if this world passes away, Jesus will make all things new.

So would you encourage us with that truth, help us to live in light of it in our attitudes and actions and relationships. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "Twelve Rules for life, Bringing order to chaos"; the book's subtitle is *An Antidote to Chaos* (Jordan B. Peterson, 2018). Source: Penguin Random House catalog, *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos*. ↩