

## **What Jesus Went to Prepare**

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# OPENING

Most of us have spent time waiting on something we weren't sure was coming.

Maybe it was a phone call you weren't sure you'd get. A person you weren't sure would show up. A promise somebody made that you weren't sure they'd keep.

And there's a particular kind of tired that comes with that kind of waiting. Not physical tired. Soul tired. The kind where you're not sure if what you're holding on for is even real anymore.

But there's a different kind of waiting. The kind where you've seen something. Where you know what's at the end of it. Where the wait is hard but the certainty is unshakeable.

That's not endurance. That's anticipation.

I want to talk to you this morning about the difference — because I think a lot of us are enduring when God designed us to be anticipating.

# SERIES BRIDGE

We've been in a series called The Book of Life. Pastor started us in Revelation chapter 20, at the Great White Throne. He showed us the books — plural — the record of every deed, every word, every hidden thing. And then another book. A different book. The Book of Life. He showed us names can be blotted out of it. And he left us with a question that's been sitting over this whole series: where is your name?

Two weeks ago I picked that question up and asked a follow-up. Not just where your name is — who's speaking it. We looked at Zechariah's courtroom, the Advocate who speaks first, before the accusation can land. We ended with a different question: am I still His?

Last week Pastor answered that with one word. Commitment. And he's right.

But I want to ask one more follow-up this morning. Commitment to what, exactly? Because commitment without a vision of what you're committing to isn't commitment. It's just willpower. And willpower runs out.

## MOVEMENT 1: THE GROOM

# WENT TO PREPARE

## **John 14:1-3** ESV

<sup>1</sup> “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.

<sup>2</sup> In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

<sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

Pastor showed you the wedding tradition last week. The groom goes back to his father's house. He builds a room, prepared specifically for his bride. And the groom doesn't get to decide when it's finished. His father does. The son builds. The father inspects. Only when the father says "it is enough" does the son go get his bride.

That's the picture behind Matthew 25. That's why the wise virgins kept oil in their lamps. They didn't know the hour. Nobody did. Not even the groom.

But Jesus takes that same tradition here and says something the wedding tradition alone doesn't tell you.

He doesn't just say, "I'm going to build you a room."

He says, "I go to prepare a place for you."

Most of us have a vague idea. A mansion somewhere. Streets of gold. But I don't think we've actually let ourselves picture it. So this morning I want to show you what John actually saw. Not a symbol. Not a metaphor.

What did He go to prepare?

## THE HINGE

Before I show you, I want you to see something else first. Turn to Revelation chapter 21, verse 27.

### **Revelation 21:27 ESV**

<sup>27</sup> But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

For three weeks this Book has been a courtroom document. Names written. Names blotted out. The judgment seat. The Advocate who speaks for you when the accusation comes.

All of that is true. But here, in the very last mention of the Book of Life in all of Scripture, it's not sitting on a throne anymore.

It's standing at a gate.

A courtroom looks backward. A gate looks forward.

I don't just want to tell you that. I want to show you what's on the other side of it.

## MOVEMENT 2: THE CITY

### **Revelation 21:1-3 BSB**

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

<sup>2</sup> I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God.

This is what He went to prepare.

Not a vague idea of heaven. A city. Coming down. Prepared. And notice the direction — we spend so much time thinking about going up to God. That's not what happens here. God comes down. He moves in. He doesn't summon you to a

distant throne room. He dwells with you.

Look at chapter 21, verse 22-25.

**Revelation 21:22–25 ESV**

<sup>22</sup> And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

<sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

<sup>24</sup> By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it,

<sup>25</sup> and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.

No temple, because He is the temple. No sun, no moon, because He is the light. Gates that never close, because there's nothing left outside worth fearing.

Now chapter 22, verse 1-2.

**Revelation 22:1–2 ESV**

<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>2</sup> 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.

A river that never runs dry. A tree that never stops bearing. Healing for the nations.

Verse 3.

**Revelation 22:3** **ESV**

<sup>3</sup> 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.

Everything the curse broke — gone. Everything sin twisted — undone.

I want you to think about that. All we have known is a world shaped by sin. Jesus purchased a new world.

Now think about what it costs you right now just to keep going. To get up and go to a job that drains you. To keep showing up for a marriage that takes more than it gives some days. To keep parenting when you're exhausted and not sure you're doing any of it right. To keep believing when the prayer goes unanswered and the diagnosis doesn't change and the phone call you're waiting on never comes.

Some of you are not just tired. You're running on fumes.

You've been surviving for so long you've forgotten what it feels like not to.

Look what verse 5 says is waiting for you.

**Revelation 22:5 ESV**

<sup>5</sup> And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

**[PEAK ONE — loud, declarative]**

They will reign. Forever and ever.

More than conquerors, sin defeated, princes and priests, etc

**[Let the room respond. Don't rush this.]**

**[Deliberate drop — quiet, still]**

But of everything He went to prepare — the river, the tree, the throne, even the reigning — there is one thing greater than all of it.

Go back with me to verse 4.

**Revelation 22:4 ESV**

<sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

They will see His face.

Right now, everything we know of Him, we know secondhand. We know Him through Scripture. Through answered prayer. Through a peace that doesn't make sense in the middle of a storm. Paul said it's like seeing in a mirror dimly. A reflection. Not the real thing.

But they will see His face.

Not a mirror. Not a shadow. Him. Directly. No veil. No distance. No barrier left standing between you and Him.

They will see His face.

Every moment you've begged Him to show up and *felt* like He didn't. Every prayer that *felt* like it hit the ceiling. All of it was reaching for something that, one day, won't require reaching at all.

You will see His face.

Not just reunited with the people we love. Finally seeing the face of the One we've been longing for. The One who ransomed us.

That's what He went to prepare.

**[Let the room sit here. This is the peak. Do not rush past**

it.]

## CLOSE

Scripture never called you to endure toward nothing.

It called you to anticipate a city. A city where He wipes every tear with His own hand. Where there's no temple because there's no need for one. No sun because He is the light. No curse left to break anything ever again.

And a face. The face you've been made to long for since before you knew His name.

That city is not a metaphor. It is not a nice thing we say at church. It is a real place, being prepared right now, by a real Savior, for real people.

The question this whole series has been asking is where is your name. This morning I'm telling you why that question matters so much.

It's not just about staying out of the fire. It's about that city. It's about that gate. It's about walking through it one day and finding out every single thing He promised was true and it was worth every hour we spent waiting on it.

I want my name in that Book. Not just because of what it

saves me from. Because of what it lets me into. Because of what He went to prepare. Because of who is already there, waiting.

Maybe some of you aren't sure. You're not sure your name is written there. You've never settled it. If that's you, I'm not asking you to just feel something this morning. I'm asking you to settle it. The gate is real. The city is real. And the door into it is standing open right now for anyone willing to walk through it.

Hold fast. Keep watching.

The city is real. And it's worth it.