

XIII. The Gospel of Jesus Christ in Biblical Perspective
The Majesty, Message and Ministry of the Gospel
“Glorification: Home At Last”

I Corinthians 15

Dr. Harry Reeder

December 23, 2012 – Morning Sermon

I Corinthians 15:1-11 says [1] *Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, [2] and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. [3] For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, [5] and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. [6] Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. [7] Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. [8] Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. [9] For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. [10] But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. [11] Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

All of us have some fascination with the future, don’t we? We have this fascination that we want to know what is going to happen next and what’s in the future. So we’re always looking for it. It got King Saul into trouble. It has gotten many into trouble. We always want to know what’s next. John asked the question to Jesus about Peter, “What’s going to happen to Peter?” The Bible gives us some information of what will happen in the future and I’m constantly amazed at how the church of Jesus Christ over interprets what God says. Where God is silent we speak and come up with amazing charts, plans, and dates which He even warns us not to do but there are some things we can know about the future. It is those things that are wrapped up in this concluding sermon of thirteen sermons on the majesty, message and ministry of the Gospel.

This study deserves its own series. We have looked at the majesty of the Gospel where the Gospel is not a whining appeal of God when someone might say “God won’t you give some notice to me?” On the contrary the Gospel is the majestic announcement of the King that He has won the victory. Go up on the mountain and the wall and announce Good Tidings, Glad Tidings that the King has triumphed over His enemies and He has saved His people from their sins.

Therefore the message of the Gospel is a message by God and for God. It’s a message about man as a sinner where he can’t save himself. It’s a message about Jesus Christ who is God’s solution to our problem. It’s a message of grace, God’s motivation and means of giving this to us. It’s not earned or merited. It’s a message that summons us to faith and repentance yet when that message comes it comes to the ears of people who are spiritually dead because as sinners we’re dead in our sins. So how can we possibly come to the Lord?

That gets us to the ministry of the Gospel. Just as the message of the Gospel gives us the glorious history of what Christ has done, the ministry of the Gospel gives us the glorious declaration of what the Holy Spirit does to save His people. Jesus said, "Father, all whom You have given Me, I lose not one but I raise them up on the last day." Notice it's not all who come to Me but it's all the Father gives to Me shall come to Me. Whom He foreknew He predestined, whom He predestined He called, whom He called He justified and whom He justified He glorified. So those whom the Father has given to Him He will lose not one but will raise them up on the last day. How will He do that? How will these dead sinners come to this life message? It is because He sends the Holy Spirit.

We have been looking at that glorious ministry of the Holy Spirit whereby He brings us from death unto life. In other words, the Bible says we have been saved from our sins, we are being saved from our sins and we have been saved from our sins. The Gospel is the majestic message and ministry that God's grace has saved us from our sins which is past grace, is saving us from our sins which is present grace, and in this study we'll see it will save us from our sins which is future grace. We have spent a number of studies walking through this past grace and for all who are believers, what we went over is true in your life. It is a universal yet unique message.

It is a universal message because everyone who God brings to Himself through Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. They are called, regenerated, justified and adopted yet they are also very unique because it's amazing how God wove the tapestry of His providence to bring you from death unto life – who He brought into your life, how He brought you to a place where you would listen. It is very unique how He worked in your life yet all of us who know Christ were called, born again, regenerated, justified with now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus and we are adopted into the family of God. Then that moves us to the fact that He is saving us from our sins and in this study He will save us from our sins.

Here is the timeline that I have been showing you in these studies. There is this process in your life where externally through evangelism, the Gospel came to you and internally the Holy Spirit came to bring you to life. This process is called effectual calling and that culminated in an event called conversion. In that conversion you have been born again, regenerated, justified and adopted. Now all who are a Christian today that is a done deal. That is finished in your life. It's done. It's completed. You're called, regenerated, justified and adopted. You don't get re-called, re-regenerated, re-justified or re-adopted. You were called, regenerated, justified and adopted. Now you are in the process of your Christian life which is sanctification where God is now at work in your life and you're moving to the future grace of glorification which is the consummation of everything or you are moving from conversion to consummation. Right now you're in sanctification. God is working in your life to conform you to the image of Christ.

Everything I've just talked about on this timeline except one thing is called monergistic meaning the power of One. God called you. You didn't call yourself. God regenerated you. You didn't regenerate yourself. God justified you. You didn't justify yourself. God adopted you. The last one we'll look at in this study is that God alone can glorify you but sanctification is synergistic. It is you relying one hundred percent upon God's power and grace in order to work out what He is working in. So it's one hundred

percent God and one hundred percent you. You flee temptation, study, assemble with the saints, pray, pursue holiness, memorize Scripture, meditate and you do all those things that God has appointed you to do so that you draw closer to Him. All the while you are doing that you are relying on Him.

I was asked to review a book recently about salvation and the title of the book was Jesus Plus Nothing is Everything. For five out of six that is absolutely true. In calling it's Jesus plus nothing. In regeneration it's Jesus plus nothing. In justification it's Jesus plus nothing. In adoption it's Jesus plus nothing. In glorification it's Jesus plus nothing but in sanctification Jesus plus nothing is nothing. God has called you to work out what He is working in. He has called you to be fully engaged and intentional but remember that nothing that you do in your sanctification makes you more called, nothing makes you more regenerated, nothing makes you more adopted. No matter how well you grow in your Christian life you'll never be more born again, justified, adopted or called than you are right now but you do engage.

The Christian life is not sloppy agape where you kind of hope it happens just as you remember what Jesus did for you. No, Jesus said because I did for you I want you to work out and that's why our covenant vows are so carefully worded – In humble reliance upon Divine grace in the Holy Spirit. It is one hundred percent reliance. I will endeavor. I won't half-heartedly endeavor. I will fully endeavor empowered by Him to live for Him, kill sin and love Jesus. I ask Him to help me kill sin in my life that I might love Him with all my heart and grow in grace drawing near to Him even as He draws near to me. That is present grace and that is what leads to future grace when that is completed.

In I Corinthians 15:10 it says [10] *But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, (what was the evidence that grace wasn't in vain in Paul's life) I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.* He wasn't working for salvation. He was working out his salvation for his Savior but notice the evidence of the full power of grace was not his passivity but his intentionality and activity. It is the supernatural glorious experience of the Christian life. That leads me to glorification.

The life of conversion is change where you had a personal change which is effectual calling where you were delivered from the persuasion of sin and delivered to a new perspective in Christ. You had eyes to see and ears to hear. That led to a Spiritual change which is regeneration where you were delivered from the power of sin and delivered to a new heart in Jesus Christ so that you could now repent to Christ and have faith in Christ. That led to a legal change which is justification where you were delivered from the penalty of sin and delivered to a new record in Christ so that you have been cleansed by the blood of Christ and clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

When I understood justification it was almost as if I had gotten saved all over again. I had grown up thinking like the Sunday school definition, just as if I had never sinned. That is only half of justification. In justification not only has He taken away your old record and you're forgiven of all your sins by His blood but He has also given you a new record. He has clothed you with His righteousness. It's not only as if I have just had never sinned but it's just as if I had never done anything but absolute holy righteousness in thought, word and deed in my life. I'm not just forgiven but I'm

declared innocent. I'm called righteous. Why? It's because the righteousness of Christ has clothed me. I am not only forgiven but I'm accepted in the beloved One.

That means that we have been adopted into the family of God. Therefore we have been delivered from the position of sin and delivered to a new family in Christ. God is now our Father and His people are now are brothers and sisters. That led us to our discussion of present grace which is our vocational change. We have a new life, a new vocation in life which is sanctification. We have been delivered from the practice of sin and we've been delivered to a new life in Christ. We put off the old man by killing sin and put on the new man to pursue Christ out of love to Christ to become more like Him. Because we love Him we seek to obey Him, not to be saved but because He is our Lord and Savior. We love Him who first loved us.

That leads us to future grace. Let's look back at I Corinthians 15. There was a big argument at Corinth. They didn't believe in the resurrection. At Easter many will ask "Harry isn't the resurrection simply wish fulfillment where we all just want to believe that there is a resurrection?" Let me take you back to 2000 years ago and the answer is "no." There was nothing more ridiculous to believe in the Ancient Near East and the Roman Empire than the resurrection. That entire empire had been infiltrated by Greek philosophy. Greek philosophy said the physical is bad, the spiritual is good. Therefore the whole point of salvation was to get rid of the body and that's why all the religions burned bodies when people died. They had to get rid of the body. They had no hope but God, when He made creation said the body is good, creation is good and that you are good. Not only spiritually are you under the curse of sin and everything else is under the curse of sin but when redemption comes God not only renews you spiritually but He'll renew everything physically as well. He'll accomplish everything physically so when they went out preaching the resurrection people mocked them. Right here within their own church believers said "Jesus wasn't really raised. Why would God raise that old body? Why would we be excited about the resurrection of the body?" So let's look at I Corinthians now on this.

I Corinthians 15:12-23 says [12] *Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you (the believers at Corinth) say that there is no resurrection of the dead? [13] But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. [14] And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. [15] We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. [16] For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. [17] And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. [18] Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. [19] If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. [20] But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. [21] For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. [23] But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.*

Who are those that are going to be made alive in Christ? All of Adam's seed died. Who were they? It was all of humanity. Who are all of Christ's seed? I Corinthians 15:22-23 says [22] *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. [23] But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those*

who belong to Christ. So who belong to Christ? It is all that the Father gives to Me. None of them shall be lost. So that all that belong to Christ shall be raised because Christ has been raised. All in Adam die. All in his seed, all of humanity died. All of Christ's seed, the elect of God, shall live. Why? It is because Christ has risen. What happens when everyone who belongs to Christ has come to Christ? Let's keep going.

I Corinthians 15:24-28 says [24] *Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. [25] For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. [26] **The last enemy to be destroyed is death.** [27] For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. [28] When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.*

In other words, Christ has won the victory. He has defeated all of His enemies – sin, death, hell, Satan, and the grave but He has not yet destroyed them. He defeated them at His first advent and set us free but He has not yet destroyed them. He will do that when He comes again. When will He come again? It will be when all who are His have been brought to Him, then He delivers up the Kingdom to the Father God. What will it look like when we get raised? With what kind of body will they have? How are they raised? Here is a little preview. Here's what we'll look like.

I Corinthians 15:35-49 says [35] *But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" [36] You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. [37] And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. [38] But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. [39] For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. [40] There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. [41] There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. (Scientists just found out that planets and stars don't have the same glory but God had already said that. So here are these differing glories.) [42] So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. [43] It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. [44] It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. [45] Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. [46] But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. [47] The first man was from the earth, a man of dust (Adam); the second man (Christ) is from heaven. [48] As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. [49] Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.* In other words, the resurrected body of Christ shall be like ours into eternity.

So what are some of the things we have gathered thus far from this? We have said the Gospel is the first of the first things. It is the foundation, formation and the motivation of the Christian life. He said "I delivered to you the Gospel which is first." Secondly, the resurrection was attacked but Paul didn't back off of this. He didn't say

“If we keep talking about the resurrection we won’t get as many to come to church because they don’t like that.” He said “Not only do you have to believe in the resurrection of the body of Jesus because if it wasn’t true then the Gospel preaching isn’t true.” So he brought forth that which was essential, preached it and did not back off even though the pressure was coming from both inside and outside of the church about backing off of this. The third thing you see is that Adam brings effectively death to all of his seed. Christ the second Adam brings effectively life to all of His seed. All who are in Christ shall be born again and brought into the Kingdom of God with a resurrected body.

Here is something else we find. It says when all who are Christ’s come to Him then comes the end. We just found out the end is not the end but it’s the beginning of a new body, a new heavens and a new earth. We not only have a new heavens and a new earth but you’ll have a new body which is perfect for that new heavens and that new earth. That body will be fashioned for eternity. He goes on to speak more about this in I Corinthians 15:50 -58 which says [50] *I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.* (In other words something has to happen to this heaven, this earth and this body. It has to be transformed, translated.) [51] *Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, [52] in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. [53] For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. [54] When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” [55] “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” [56] The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. [57] But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. [58] Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*

An enormous statement has just been made about our bodies. Every one of us have to shed this body. It’s just a seed. We all know this that the vegetables that you have been eating this week didn’t look like that when they went into the ground. Yet the seed bore resemblance but it was not what came forth. This is why believers have always taken care of the burial of believers. It’s not for us to make it easy for God to find the body at the resurrection. That’s not the reason. The reason that believers have always laid aside the body in reverence in contrast to the religions of the world that destroyed it but we were making a statement. God has saved this person but He’s not through yet. I believe in the resurrection of the body. He is going to raise that body just as He did Jesus and like the body of Jesus this person shall have a body that’s like this – recognizable, transformed, fit for eternity. There will be eating, drinking, walking and my guess, playing, working but no curse, no sin, no ability to sin and none of those things are present. So you will now have this new body that is fit and will all come about at the last trumpet. What is that? That will be at the second coming of Christ. So the resurrection awaits the second coming. The second coming awaits us (I’ll put it in our vernacular), His church finishing iShare and when the last one has been gathered then shall come the end which is the beginning. That is glorification.

So what is future grace? Future grace is eternal change. We have seen personal change, spiritual change, legal change, relational change and vocational change. Now

future grace is an eternal change of glorification where we will be delivered from the presence of sin and delivered to a new home in Christ. We will be in the presence of the Lord. In John 14 Jesus said “Do not let your heart be fearful. Do not be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in Me. I go to prepare a place for you and if I go to prepare a place for you then I will come again for you so that where I am there you will be also. In My Father’s house are many rooms, many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare this place for you. You don’t get that place of the new heavens and the new earth until I come back but you do know when I come back you’ll have it.”

What happens to those who have died? They go to be with the Lord but they haven’t had glorification yet. Absent from the body is present with the Lord. Paul said “I long to be with Him yet when I go to be with Him I’ll be unclothed.” It’s not the final state. It’s the intermediate state. So if you die and Jesus hasn’t come back yet or all of your brothers and sisters in Christ who have died, are with the Lord and they have unbelievable joy but it’s not glorification yet. That awaits a resurrected body. That awaits the coming of Christ. That awaits all who are Christ’s, being gathered to Christ. Peter says in II Peter “Beloved (speaking to God’s people, the elect of God), why hasn’t Jesus come back yet. He is not slow concerning His promise. He is patient not wishing for any of you (believers) to perish.” He is waiting for all of His people to come, then shall come the end when He delivers up the Kingdom to His Father.

People ask me “Pastor, when is Jesus coming back again?” I don’t read the tea leaves of life to tell you. Here is what I believe. I believe the intensity of a groaning creation will intensify but what I know must happen and when it happens Jesus comes back is simply this. The Gospel will be preached to all the nations and all of His people will be gathered in. Then comes the end. Now do you see why the Apostle Peter tells us to go share the Gospel and hasten the coming of the Lord? I think about this every time I’m sharing Christ with somebody. I’m thinking this could be the last one. If it’s the last one then He comes! It’s a done deal. There will be the new heavens and the new earth. There is a last one to be converted and all that the Father gives to Me shall come to Me. When that last one comes then comes the end which is the beginning.

Let me give you some takeaways to close. The first one is what about death and glorification? Death is not natural. Many of you have heard me say this and I share this a lot at funerals. I have been asked to pray that people would have a natural death and I tell them I can’t do that. I can pray for you to have a victorious death, triumphant death or easy death but I can’t pray for you to have a natural death because there is nothing natural about death. You don’t find death in Genesis 1 and 2. You don’t find death until Genesis 3 when sin enters the world. Death is the wages of sin. There is nothing natural about death. Death is not a friend. Death is an enemy but I do know death has been defeated by Christ. “Death where is your sting? Where is your victory?” Christ won the victory over you because He has taken away my sin and brought me out from under the law under His grace. I’m cleansed by His blood and clothed with His righteousness. While death has been defeated it hasn’t been destroyed.

Jesus said not all believers will die because there will be some living when He comes back who will be caught up to be with Him. But if He doesn’t come back first every single one of us will die but when we die where Paul calls it sleep and not because he is teaching soul sleep, no absent from the body present with the Lord. He puts sleep there because the death of a believer is different. You don’t die, you walk through the

valley of the shadow of death into the presence of the Lord. He has defeated Satan, sin, death but He hasn't destroyed them. He'll destroy them when He comes again. So death is not the believer's termination. Death is the initiation of the believer's transformation to a final consummation when Jesus returns and glorification. That transformation will end in glorification at the consummation when Jesus comes again.

Where are we between our death and His coming? We are with the Lord. I know we mean well when we tell people who have lost a loved one who is a believer that we're sorry for their loss and they have lost something but that person has gained something. I know it's hard for us to understand when a child, parent, husband or wife leaves us and we say "Your loss is great but their gain is glorious." When I have said this people have told me that's hard feeling but no it's not hard feeling. If your loved one died and had gone to be with the Lord is with the Lord and they could come back, they wouldn't. They want you to get there but unless God sent them back they wouldn't come back. Are you saying they don't love us? No, they love you. Our problem is we don't understand the majesty of the presence of the Lord. Eye has not seen, ear has not heard what the Lord has prepared for those who love Him. It is beyond our imagination and it's so glorious but you haven't lost them and they haven't left the land of the living to go to the land of the dying. They left the land of the dying and they went to the land of the living but they're in an intermediate state. They are not in the final state. They are with the Lord. The Gospel has been gloriously brought to the point that they're with the Lord but the new heavens, the new earth, the new body and the glorification of everything awaits.

That brings me to number two which is the resurrection and glorification. That is the final state. When is the resurrection? It is when Christ returns. When will Christ return? It is when the work of evangelism is through and all of His people have been brought to Himself. All that awaits the coming of Christ is that glorious conversion of all of His people. I want to look at Romans 8:10-12, 15-25 which says *[10] But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. [11] If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. [12] So then brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. [15] For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry "Abba, Father!" [16] The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, [17] and if children then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him, in order that we may also be glorified with Him. [18] For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. [19] For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. (Why is this all still here? It is because God hasn't manifested it yet. The creation is still here until all the sons of God have been brought to Him.) [20] For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope; [21] that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. [22] For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of child birth until now. [23] And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for the adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. [24]*

For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? [25] But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

In other words all this that we are hearing about with these storms and hurricanes are the creation groaning. Those aren't the signs of the second coming those are the pangs of childbirth. That's the sign that the creation longs to be delivered. It is just like your body groaning. I wished you could have been with me at 4am this morning. I was groaning to be delivered. My only shot to get hear was taking Pepto-Bismol but my big shot is that I'll be with Him. When He comes I'll get a new body for the new heavens and the new earth and the presence of sin is gone. The ability to sin is gone. I don't have to have another accountability group. I don't have to pursue holiness. I will live holiness. I don't have to kill sin. It's been thrown into hell with Satan and death. It's been destroyed and I'll have that body that is like His and so will you. That is what awaits us at that moment.

That brings me to the last thing and I'd like to look at Revelation 21 for this. This third takeaway is the consummation and glorification. I hope in this study of the last thirteen studies you have heard the glorious Good News as God the Father has authored your salvation. God the Son has accomplished your salvation. God the Spirit has applied it. He has called you and brought you to Christ through regeneration. In Christ there is justification. He has adopted you and is now sanctifying you. One day He will glorify you yet you will not be glorified until Christ comes again but when He comes that will be glory. Praise the Lord for the intermediate state. It is so glorious that you would never come back here from it but it's not the final state.

What does that final state look like? It won't come until Christ comes. When Christ comes there is a resurrection. When the resurrection comes He delivers up the Kingdom to His Father and this old heavens and old earth Peter says will be burned up and rolled away like a scroll. Those who don't know Christ will be given an eternal body for eternal condemnation and torment. How do I not be numbered with them? It's simple. If Jesus Christ is calling you come to Him. Here is what you do. You acknowledge you're a sinner, you can't save yourself and you lay down the arms of your rebellion which is sin and surrender to Jesus Christ. I am Yours and You are mine.

Then here is what you have waiting for you when He comes again. I read this passage in Revelation at many funerals leading the family in. Revelation 21:1-6a says *[1] 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. [2] And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. [3] And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. [4] He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. [5] And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." [6a] And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end."*

There is victory in His first advent. He is now making all things new. I go away to prepare a place for you and when He comes again it's done. You shall be raised to be with Him. Whenever Jesus, Paul and Peter, called you to follow Christ with obedience

they always did two things. They pointed back to the cross which is who you are in Christ by grace and because of who you are live for Him who made you who you are by His grace. Then they point you forward. This is what you will be. Be ready. Man knows not his time and when He comes it shall be like a thief in the night. After all His people have been gathered unto Himself, His people will be looking but sudden destruction will visit those who do not know Him. If you know Him, when you die you will go to be with Him but the final state is not simply the glory of going to be with Him in the intermediate state. It is He will come down to be with you in the new heavens and the new earth and no pain, no sorrow, no death, no sin but Christ. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together. Thank You for the glorious work of Christ from our conversion to our consummation. O God our God do Your work here today I pray. If you have never made that commitment to Christ may I invite you to do that today? There are people here at Briarwood ready to pray with you. I pray that the glories of heaven in Christ who was born this season we celebrate to set us free, might set you free in Him, to know Him, love Him and serve Him. Surrender to Him. Dear friends who know Christ, I now pray for you. Lord, may Your people know who they are in Christ. May they then do what they do not out of slavish fear to work their way to salvation but out of glorious love of obedience because they love their Savior whom they work for until He comes or they go to be with Him. Jesus we long to see You. Come quickly Lord Jesus, I pray, Amen.