

Family Worship - Recreation

MPS: God makes masterpieces out of our miseries

Revelation 21:1–8 (ESV) **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." **6** And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. **7** The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son

INTRO

Welcome to our Family Worship Service; we do one of these each quarter.

Why?

1. To encourage Family Worship / Family Discipleship
2. Kids are able to be a part of the visible church.

What are the benefits:

1. Teaching kids how to sit, observe, and partake in Sunday gathering worship
 2. Workers have a reprieve
- This year's theme has been the Redemptive Historical Narrative (God's story; the metanarrative of Scripture)
 - God's story in the Scriptures is portrayed in 4 parts – Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Re-creation. We have been walking through those in our FWS this year.
 - We have covered 3 of the 4 parts of the RHN this year in our Family Worship Services (Creation, Fall, Redemption...) Today we will cover the last part, Recreation.
 - Before we get into Recreation, let me distinguish the difference between intermediate heaven and the eternal state:
 - The last two chapters of Revelation is a whole new section– it is the most comprehensive material in all of the NT about the Eternal State – Heaven.
 - The Bible begins and ends very similarly.

- In Genesis there is CREATION – in Revelation there is RECREATION
 - In Genesis there is a tree of Life – in Revelation there is a tree of life.
 - In Genesis there is a marriage – in Revelation there is a marriage
 - In Genesis lights are called into being – In Revelation God is our light.
 - In Genesis the devil tempts – in Revelation the devil cast out.
 - In Genesis humans hide from God – in Revelation God dwells with them
 - Genesis describes the Paradise Lost the revelation of Paradise regained,
- the story ends where it begins...except that it just begins all over in a new way.

OPEN:

- Have you ever tried drawing something and made a mistake? But then you decided to take your mistake and make it into something completely different? (example).
- It's like you turned your mistake into a masterpiece. "there are no mistakes...just happy little accidents," Bob Ross.
- What if I told you that God does something sort of like that but only better.
- God is the Master designer of your life – He is the ultimate artist. Everything that you have done, all that has happened to you and through you, in His providence He is painting your story.
- See, in this life, we run into problems, we experience disappointments, a we deal with hard things. We lose things, we get sad sometimes, we get hurt sometimes. And in this life, we even lose people we love.
- Those aren't necessarily mistakes – we call those things suffering – and suffering comes from the fall. Sometimes adults call our sufferings, miseries.
- And much like you can turn your mistakes into masterpieces,
- **God makes masterpieces out of our miseries.**

2 Corinthians 4:17–18 (ESV) 17 *For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.*

- Jesus still has scars – those scars tell of 3 days of sadness and misery that are overshadowed by an eternity of glory.

Vs 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.*

- While this is a new world, it is not an ‘other’ world. The word here for “new” [*kainos*] suggests newness in quality, not newness in kind.
- This is not Ex Nihilo – creation out of nothing. God is not starting from scratch, but is renewing, recreating His original creation.
- There is a difference between the intermediate state and the eternal state.
- The intermediate state is where believers go when they die – it’s a temporary heaven.
- It’s where Jesus is now

Philippians 1:23 (ESV) *I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.*

- The eternal state is the ultimate new Heaven and earth. It’s our final destination.

2 Peter 3:10 (ESV) *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.*

Luke 21:33 (ESV) *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.*

- “the sea was no more” is a way of illustrating for us the permanent removal of everything sinful and everything that could ever challenge God's order.
- It is a renovated universe purged of everything sinful.
- Which means there will not be the slightest threat to our eternal well-being.
 - We won’t be tempted to hate one another, be offended, be offensive, suffer, be in pain, have anxiety, be depressed, be bored, no more worry of what could happen to us
- In the new creation, colors, textures, sights, sounds, smells, tastes all heightened to the full intensity of their potential forever.
- Paradise Lost will become paradise regained. But without the serpent and the pain he brings.

Vs 2 *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

- This holy city, the New Jerusalem is speaking more about the community of God's people, the church, than it is an actual city –
- Could a city even be a city without its inhabitants? The inhabitants of this city is none other than the bride of Christ – those who belong to Him!
- Vs 9-10 actually tell us that the New Jerusalem IS the bride of Christ.

Revelation 21:9–10 (ESV) *9 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,*

- what's the first vision John sees in the eternal state? not streets of gold, not the tree of life, not our 'mansion' BUT the CHURCH! Even though she is imperfect now, she will be spotless and blameless on this day that all sad things become untrue...she, today, is an appetizer for the goodness to come.
- It's as if it's what Jesus is most proud of.
- Why should you love the church? Because God loves the church...much like you love your children when they are babies...dreaming of what they will become.

Vs 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.*

- Just as it was in Genesis before the fall, Adam walked with God – God dwelt with man. Now, again, God dwells with His people.

Vs 4-5a *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."*

- Explain some streaks of suffering and misery

Betrayal, Divorce, Death, the accident, the Fall into substance abuse, The man assaulted you. The family member that abused you, the dozens of Negative pregnancy tests, the bankruptcy, the tragedy with your child, the Day your wife passed, the day dad died, the day that everything became your fault, the diagnosis, the cancer, the abandonment, the rejection, the shame, the guilt,

- Lord of the Rings illustration:

- Sam is just looking and seeing all of this and he's bewildered. He's like, we were gonna die but we're alive. The ring is destroyed, Sauron is defeated, everything's gonna be all right - here are all my friends, the heroes and, and oh my gosh, Gandalf is alive and you're actually better than you ever were. And he just goes What is happening? Is everything sad going to come untrue?
- Sad things becoming untrue is an “is this Heaven” moment. I would say that is what is happening here in Rev 21-22...

This is the day all sad things become untrue.

- It's not a sort of heavenly amnesia. We won't forget the facts of suffering that has happened in this broken world. It's just that all of the sadness and suffering will be seen as God's sovereign work for our good and His glory, (Rom 8:28).
- The facts of suffering will still be true, but the sadness affiliated with those facts will become untrue.
- It's not just that sad things become untrue – God makes masterpieces out of your miseries.
- Jesus's scars are the centerpiece of His Glory. God will take YOUR scars and make them the centerpiece of His masterpiece.

Bob Ross illustration:

In the meantime.... persevere... stay with Jesus.

CONCLUSION

Vs 5b-7 *Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” 6 And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. 7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.*

- What makes Heaven, Heaven is that Jesus is there.
- If Jesus wasn't in Heaven, would you still want to go there?
- Richard Baxter, a man of suffering, was once asked how he endured such a life of misery. He answered, “I meditate on Heaven 30 minutes each day.”

Colossians 3:1–2 (ESV) *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 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*

- You don't have to wait for heaven to experience hope. You can experience hope now by knowing Jesus and His glory that awaits you.
- If a man is in jail finds out he is pardoned, even though he may remain there another month before being released, he will be joyful and hopeful.
- Our streaks without a clear doctrine of suffering, will either make us the bitter or a victim.
- Don't hate on earth what will be the most glorious thing about you in Heaven.
- The eternal state, the new creation, the RE creation is our hope because it's center is Jesus who is our hope and in his power and love, makes sad things untrue and makes masterpieces out of miseries.
- Are you asking yourself today, "How could someone like me have God?" Let's flip that on its head...Because of all Jesus has done, the real question is, "How could someone like me refuse God?" My friend, do not refuse God. Is anything keeping you from receiving God as your eternal joy?

Questions for Groups:

1. Share a time in your life that was very hard; something you would consider suffering. How do you see God not wasting your suffering and using it for His glory and for others.
2. Go around the room and share what you look forward to most about the New Heavens and New earth (eternal state of heaven).
3. Richard Baxter said he meditated on Heaven 30 minutes a day to help him persevere through suffering. Take a moment to share with the group a good way to meditate on Heaven on a regular basis.