

The Glories of the New Heaven and the New Earth

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[0 : 0 0] Let's pray together and come before our Father in Heaven for a few minutes. And just to remind you, I'm going to lead us in prayer over the mic, but this is us as a family praying. So join me, listen to what I'm saying and agree with me and join me in prayer.

Let's pray together. Sovereign Lord, we gather as your people this morning to worship you, to honor you, to declare your praises and your worth, but also, Father, to set our own hearts aright.

God, come and set our hearts in your heart, God. Come and rightly tune our hearts to your heart. Father, this morning we want our eyes to be fixed on you and to be reminded of who you are, your infinite worth, and who you've called us to be.

And so we come before you this morning to do that, Lord. Glorious Lord, we come before you this morning not out of any sense of confidence or assurance in ourselves. We come before you broken and wounded.

We come full of sin and in need of your mercy and your grace. Loving Father, gracious Son, Holy Spirit, cover us in your grace this morning, we pray. Father, forgive us our many sins.

[1 : 1 1] Renew us in the gospel. God, if we're honest with ourselves, not a single day has gone past this last week in which we haven't sought our own glory above yours.

Live for our own desires rather than your desires. Sought our own worth and peace and false saviors rather than you. So this morning, Father, we confess this.

Father, we confess that we are unable to save ourselves. But God, we're also confident that we cannot exhaust your mercy. Father, our confidence is not in ourselves but in your extravagant grace.

And so we come to you as we are, seeking both your forgiveness and your grace. But also, God, your grace to reorientate our hearts towards you. Father, this morning as we look at Revelation 21 and consider our heavenly home, we confess we fully don't understand what heaven is going to be like.

But we do long for it, God. Father, we acknowledge that we are often seduced by the kingdoms of this world. And our self-centeredness delves our love for you.

[2 : 1 6] God, won't you help us to remember our eternal hope and to seek you, God. Father, when pain and suffering and tears overwhelm us, Father, help us to look to our eternal home with you.

Christ, come and capture our hearts, we pray. Father, this morning we want to pray for the mental health situation in Hong Kong, God. We want to pray in light of the last six months of protests so many Hong Kongers are feeling on edge, God.

Are experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder, God. So many are anxious, are worried and weary, Lord God. Father, we want to bring the citizens and our brothers and sisters and our neighbors and our family and friends before you, God.

And we want to ask for your grace to rest in Hong Kong, God. We want to ask for healing. We pray, God, for those that are really struggling. For the youth. We pray for the police, God, that are working such long hours, God.

We pray, Father, God, for those that are working in this field. Counselors and psychologists and psychiatrists, God. We pray for profound wisdom. God, we pray for those offering these services for healing and health to come to Hong Kong.

[3 : 30] God, we don't want to see the ramifications of this extrapolated across Hong Kong. We want to see our city experience healing and wholeness. And so we bring the citizens of our city before you. And we ask, God, for your grace.

We pray for healing, God. We pray for conversations to happen. We pray for families, God, where there's this unity and strife. We pray for healing. We pray that people be able to talk and listen to one another without it getting into arguments.

God, we pray, come and heal our city. We so need you, Father. We so need you. Father, lastly, as we gather in Admiralty this morning, we want to lift up before you the churches that gather in this area.

Think of Kung Fu Church across the road there. We think of Ambassador Church just up the hill. And no doubt they have countless others. God, we bring these brothers and sisters before you. And we ask for you to bless them abundantly.

We ask for your favor to rest upon these churches. We pray for many people to come to know you. We pray in their Christmas seasons, their outreaches, their Christmas services will be extravagantly blessed.

[4 : 34] We pray, God, for their dreams and their hopes as churches that you will bless them, Lord God, that you will lead them. We pray for new leaders to emerge and for the youth to emerge.

We pray, God, for these churches in this area that you really will bless them. Pray for your Holy Spirit to be evident in their services, God, and leading them and guiding them. So we bring our brothers and sisters before you.

We bring this area before you. We say, Jesus, let your kingdom come. We pray these things in your wonderful and your faithful name. Amen. Amen. Let's listen as Joanne is going to come read Revelation 21 to us.

The scripture reading comes from Revelation 21. Please follow along in your bulletin or on the screen. 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. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

[5 : 47] And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with men. He will dwell with them.

And they will dwell with them. And they will be his people. And God himself will be with them as their God. 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.

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.

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.

[6 : 51] The one who conquers will have this heritage. And I will be his God, And he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, The faithlessly, The detestable, As for murderers, The sexual immoral, Sorcerers, Adolators, And all liars, The portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, Which is the second death.

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven lamb's plate, And spoke to me, Seeing, Come, I will show you the bride, The wife of the lamb.

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, Having the glory of God, Its radiance like a most rare jewel, Like a jasper, Clear as crystal.

It had a great high wall with twelve gates, And at the gates twelve angels, And on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed.

On the east, three gates, On the north, three gates, On the south, three gates, And on the west, three gates, And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, And on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the lamb.

[8 : 27] And on the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, And its gates and walls. The city lies four square, Its length the same as its width, And he measured the city with his rod, Twelve thousand stadia.

Its length and width and height are equal. He also measured its wall, A hundred and forty-four cubits, By human measurement, Which is also an angel's measurement.

The wall was built of jasper, While the city was pure gold, Like clear glass. And I saw no temple in the city, For this temple is the Lord God the Almighty, And the Lamb.

And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it. For the glory of God gives its light, And its lamp is the lamp. By its light will the nations walk, And the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

And its gates will never be shut by day, And there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 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.

[9 : 49] This is the word of God. Great, thanks, Joanne. Okay, I'm not sure if you've ever had an incredibly busy season at work, Or maybe university, And you've thought to yourself, I've just got to get through the next three weeks, And then I've got a holiday coming.

Maybe you feel like that right now, right? The end of the year, I've just got to get through, And a holiday is coming. Whenever we go on holiday, I often feel like the day that the holiday arrives, I couldn't have gone one more day without this holiday coming.

In our family, Family holidays are one of the things we treasure the most. We absolutely love family holidays. And my kids have got a thing where, Whenever they're going away, Or holiday, Or something's coming, They make a massive countdown calendar.

And like an advent calendar, But three months worth. And so before we moved to Hong Kong, We had a countdown calendar, 95 days. And on the doors, From almost the top of the door, Down to the bottom.

And each day, The kids would mark off one day, One less sleep, Until we moved to Hong Kong, Etc. Today we are in the second last chapter, Of the book of Revelation.

[11 : 05] And indeed, The entire Bible. And that's the very best description, That we have, Of what heaven is going to be like. But, For the first century Christians, In the Roman Empire, What we read this morning, Was far more than just, An interesting discussion.

Far more than just a boring sermon, On a Sunday morning. For them, For the Christians in the first century, Followers of Jesus, Who were facing this, Unbelievable opposition, And persecution, Sometimes from their own families, Sometimes from those, In the culture outside.

It wasn't a trip to the Maldives, It wasn't just a skiing holiday, That was coming on, That would get them through. For the first century Christians, That were facing this opposition, It was this vision of the world to come, That gave them such confidence, And encouragement, And endurance, In the midst of great opposition, And persecution.

For the first century, Followers of Jesus, Following Jesus meant, Losing social credit, It meant being ostracized, It meant being branded, As anti-Roman, For some of them, It may mean, Losing jobs, Or work opportunities, For some of them, It may even be, Men being fed to the lions, Or being burnt at the stake, But these followers of Jesus, Had a vision, That many people, That would consider themselves, Christians today, Have very little concept of, They had a vision, Of the will to come, Of their home, In heaven, And which was awaiting them, Remember, Much of the book of Revelation, Jeremy spoke about it, When we sang, Is about the encouragement, Or the call from Jesus, This call to endurance, Jesus starts off, The book of Revelation, With his letter, To these churches, And he says, To the ones that endure, To the ones that conquer, To the ones that overcome, But how does Jesus do that?

He doesn't just promise them, A trip to the Maldives, Or Christmas holiday coming up, He promises them, A vision of the will to come, And that gives these followers of Jesus, In the midst of unbelievable opposition, Great encouragement, For what's coming their way, So this morning, As we look at this passage, We're going to see four things, Four things that mark, Or define, Our heavenly home, Of this will to come, We're going to see that, Heaven is marked by, It's a physical space, It is promises, Or longings fulfilled, It is intimate relationships, And then finally, It's marked by God's good, And gracious presence, Okay, So let's dive in, Firstly, Our heavenly home, Is a physical place, Most religious world views, Look at the world, In a dualistic manner, Right, So most religious world views, Will see, The world in which we live now, Is a physical world, But it's a lesser world, And a greater world, Is one that is immaterial, Or spiritual, So in the western thinking,

[13 : 56] A lot of this comes from, Plato, And such philosophers, They were gnostic in their thinking, They were thinking, This world is a lesser world, We've got to get through this, And one day we'll be promoted, To a higher and a better world, Which is immaterial, And so if you can just, Deal with, With this world, And try and, Focus our minds on the immaterial, The spiritual, The philosophical, That's actually where we want to live, Now in the eastern thinking, I'm not an expert in this, So you can correct me, But I think, We've got a similar thinking, Coming from Buddhism, Right, Remember what Buddha taught, The ultimate goal, Is to reach nirvana, The state of liberation, Of non-self, The state of emptiness, To be freed from the trappings, And the pleasure, Of our physical world, But over and against, These two views, The biblical worldview, Says not at all, The bible describes, The world to come, Our heavenly home, As a physical world, A world with roads, And streets, And walls, And much like a city, It's a world, In which we will inhabit,

With physical bodies, Now our physical bodies, And the world to come, Won't be exactly like these bodies, But they will be similar, Remember when Jesus dies, And rises again, And he appears to the disciples, He appears in a physical body, But his body is a little bit different, It's not exactly like this one, But it is recognizable, The disciples recognize him, And they're on the boat, And they say, Hey it's Jesus, Let's go be with him, But at the same time, Remember at one stage, The disciples are locked together, In the upper room, They're fearful, Jesus somehow, Gets into the room, Through the walls, Or the doors, His resurrection body, Has some kind of power to it, That is not contained, By the physical world, But it is still a physical body, Remember at one point, The disciples say, It must be his ghost, It's not really him, It's just his spirit, And Jesus says, No, no, no, Give me some food, Let me swallow some food, I'll show you, This is a physical body, In the same way, When we get to heaven, We're going to have physical bodies, In a physical world, Now they won't look exactly like,

Our bodies, They'll be a little bit different, Paul says in Corinthians, That our resurrection bodies, Will be imperishable, That means they won't get old, That's good news for me, I'm starting to lose some hair, My older brother is older than me, But he's got more hair than me, And he always mocks me, About the fact that I'm getting old, I'm realizing, I lose my fitness quicker, And I regain my fitness slower, Than I did, Once upon a time, It's good news for me, My resurrection body, Will be imperishable, No longer getting old, It will be glorious for a long time, For all eternity, Paul says that, Our resurrection bodies, Will be powerful, They'll be able to do things, That we can't do now, They'll be spirit empowered, So they'll be physical, But they will be empowered, By God's Holy Spirit, But they will be physical, In a physically renewed world, Look at what John says here, He says, God is going to bring heaven, And earth together, In one renewed world, Heaven and earth, They're not going to be, Two separate dichotomies, They're going to be, One renewed world,

And he describes this, New heaven and new earth, As a city, The new Jerusalem, Look at what he says in verse 2, I saw the holy city, The new Jerusalem, Coming down from heaven, For now the dwelling place of God, Is with man, He will dwell with them, What we see here, Is not a picture of humans, Going up into some mysterious, Non-physical place in the sky, But a new city, A physical place, Coming down from heaven, To a renewed world, And renewed heaven and earth, Where God dwells with his people, And the important word there, Is dwells, I don't know if you remember, In the beginning of John's gospel, Right at the beginning of the New Testament, John writes this, He says, The word became flesh, And dwelt amongst us, In other words, What he's saying is, The same way that Jesus, God, Came to be with us, In our world, In the same way, The heavens, Where God dwells, Is going to come, And unite, The new heavens and new earth, Is going to be one physical place, Where God is with his people, N.T. Wright says it like this,

What God did in Jesus, All that time ago, Coming to an unknowing world, And an unwelcoming people, He's going to do again, But on a cosmic scale, He's coming to live forever, In our midst, A healing, Comforting, Celebrating presence, Just as heaven and earth, Were once joined together, In Jesus, Heaven and earth, Will one day be joined, But this time, Fully, Finally, And forever, A few weeks ago, We were meant to look at, Revelation 17 and 18, Jeremy spoke about it, During our time of singing, But because of the protest, On HKU, We had to cancel that, I'm very sorry about that, But in Revelation 17 and 18, John talks about, The city of Babylon, Which is a euphemism, It's like code language, For the city of Rome, And for every earthly kingdom, And he describes this, Babylon, And the earthly kingdoms, As a city, But in Revelation 21, Which we read earlier, He introduces the heavenly city, With almost the exact same language,

[18 : 59] Almost word for word terminology, Look at, It's on the slide, Look at how he does this, In chapter 17 he says, One of the seven angels, Who had the seven bowls, Came and said to me, Come, I will show you, The judgment that awaits, That prostitutes, Seated on the many waters, In chapter 21 he says, Then one of the seven angels, Who had the seven bowls, Said to me, Come, I will show you the bride, The wife of the land, The man, Chapter 17 he says, He carried me away in the spirit, To a wilderness, And I saw the woman sitting there, On the beast, And on her forehead, Was written the name, Babylon the great, In chapter 21, He carried me away in the spirit, To a great high mountain, And he showed me, The heavenly city, Jerusalem, Coming down, Now, John's point here, Is the earthly kingdoms, Versus the kingdom to come, That's his point, But one of the languages, Notice what he uses, He doesn't refer to, The earthly kingdom, And this mystical, Place in the sky, Where we sit on clouds, And play harps, All day long, He compares the two,

As physical cities, There's a city called Babylon, There's a city called Rome, There's a physical city to come, Our new, And renewed heavens, And earth, And look at verse 24 with me, It's a very unusual verse, It talks about how, There's some kind of continuity, Between the culture of this world, And the world that is still to come, In verse 24 it says, The kings of the earth, Will bring their glory, Into this city to come, In other words, Not everything about this world, Is going to be trashed, And done away with, God's not going to say, Okay, It's time to come again, Let's just burn up planet earth, And we'll start again, With a new world, There's some kind of continuity, Between in the culture, The very best things, About our world as we know it, Are going to be carried, Into the world to come, Tim Chester says it like this, In the world to come, The glories of this world, Won't be replaced, They'll be fulfilled, Even redeemed for God's glory, All that is good, And the economies, And the cultures of the nations,

Will find their place, In the new Jerusalem, The world to come, The best of human culture, Is incorporated into the city to come, Quite how this works, It's a little bit unclear, That's good to know, But there's some measure, Of cultural continuity, Between this age, And the next, I don't know exactly, How that works, But there's something about, The very best things, About our world now, We're going to find expression, In our world to come, So the first point is this, Heaven, Or glory, Or the world to come, However you want to describe it, Is a physical space, And we're going to inhabit it, With physical bodies, We're not just going to be, Souls on clouds, Playing harps all day long, Okay, Great, Second thing is this, What do you see, Our future home, Is going to be the fulfillment, Of all the promises, And longings, That God spoke about, In his word, One of the challenges, For those of us, That are followers of Jesus, Is sometimes you can, Read the promises, Of the bible, And if you're honest, Sometimes they can feel, A little bit overstated, I don't know if that's,

Ever been your experience, Sometimes we read, What God promises, In his word, And our experience, Seems to fall short of that, Now that could be, Because of our own, Spiritual maturity, But also, It's because, In some way, Even the very best promises, That God promises, We're only tasting, A small glimpse of them, In this life, But in the world to come, We'll experience, The fullness, Of all of those longings, And all of those promises, And let me explain, What I mean, Look at verse 5 with me, Verse 5 and 6, John writes, He who is seated, On the throne, That's God, Said, Behold, I am making, All things new, Then he said, It is done, Now, What do you, What do those words, Remind you of?

Any ideas? Jesus on the cross, That's right, Jesus is on the cross, And what does he say? It is finished, And in many ways, Jesus is absolutely right, He died on the cross, And he paid the penalty, For sin, It is done, Jesus died on the cross, The punishment for sin, Was totally covered, Jesus purposeful coming, To purchase with his blood, The acquittal, And forgiveness, Of those that trust him, Was totally done, But in another sense, We know that Jesus coming, Isn't the end of the full story, Yeah, Yeah, The penalty for sin, Has been done with, Paid for, The power of sin, Has been disarmed, But the presence of sin, It's still here in our lives, It's still in our heart, There's still so much, Of what Jesus promised, That we get a taste of, But one day in glory, We're going to get it, Forever, We still attempt it, And we still trip up and fall, Our hearts still go after other gods,

[23 : 50] But on that day, We will hear the words, Of the one on the throne, Who says, I'm making all things new, It is done, And actually, Friends, Every theme, Throughout the Bible, That the Old Testament promises, In some ways, We get a fulfillment of it, In Jesus, And his death on the cross, But even that, Is just a, A taste of what's to come, So for instance, In the Old Testament, There's this theme, Of how we are exiles, We've been banished from God, We've lost our way, Jesus comes and dies on the cross, To bring his exiles home, But one day, When we're in glory, We're going to get our true home, The Old Testament talks about, How we are, We are orphans, Jesus died to bring us, Into his family, But we don't experience, The fullness of that now, One day we will experience, That in fullness, It's kind of like, When somebody gets engaged, Right?

What do we normally do? Harry, We, Harry's got engaged, That's not a hint, He is already engaged, Harry and Teresa, Maybe one or two others, I could drop some hints towards, But we'll do that later, So what do we do, When somebody gets engaged, We take a photo, Of the ring, Right?

Two hands together, With a diamond ring, And then we put it on Facebook, And Instagram, Hashtag, She said yes, Right? In some ways, In engagement, We get engaged, Then we have an engagement party, Invite our friends, And our family, And we have a celebration, And it's a wonderful moment, But that's nothing, Compared to the wedding day, The wedding day, Is when the real celebration happens, That's when it really is done, In some way, Jesus has come, And he's purchased his bride, As we're going to see later, John Piper says, He's paid the dowry, He's engaged to us, But he's coming again, To bring back his bride, And to marry us forever, Look at verse 6, Look at two promises, We'll just look at, In this passage, The first one, And there's so many, But verse 6 says this, To the one who is thirsty, I will give from the spring of water, Of life, Without payment, Remember in John chapter 7, Jesus says these words, He says, If anyone is thirsty, Let him come to me and drink,

For whoever believes in me, As the scripture has said, Out of his heart, Will flow rivers of living water, So Jesus promises, You spiritually dry, Thirsty, Come to me, And I will pour my Holy Spirit, Into your heart, But friends, How many of us feel, Spiritually dry, And thirsty, From time to time, Yeah, I do, How many of us, From time to time, Feel like, Gee Jesus, You promised me, Spiritual water, But I just, I just don't sense it, How many of us, From time to time, Jesus meets up, That thirst, But it doesn't feel, Like it lasts forever, Friends, In this world, Even the best, Very best, Spiritual experiences, Is just a glimpse, Just a mere drop, Of what is coming, But there is coming a day, When we will see him, Face to face, We experience in part now, We taste in part now, But there is coming a day, When we will see him, Face to face, And it will be done, When he will pour upon us, The living waters, Of the Holy Spirit, Well look at verse 4, Look at how he says here, Death will be no more,

He says, In that day, He will wipe away, Every tear from their eyes, Death will be no more, There will be no more mourning, No more crying, No more pain, The former things, Have passed away, Well doesn't that remind you, Of how Paul says in Corinthians, He says, He almost mocks death, He says, Death, Where is your sting, Death, Where is your victory, You've been overcome, You've been defeated, Think of how the apostle Paul says, When we lose a loved one, We grieve, But we don't grieve, As those that don't have hope, Because we know Jesus, But friends, Let's be real, When a loved one passes away, Do we grieve in this world?

[27 : 44] You bet we grieve, When we have to bury, A loved one, A close one, Do we mourn? Man, You better believe we mourn, And so in some ways, The New Testament promises us, That because of the hope of the gospel, Mourning and grieving, Doesn't need to have the final word, They don't need to mark our lives, They don't need to steal our joy forever, But that doesn't mean, That just because you come to Jesus, There's no more grieving, There's no more mourning, Friends, Some of you that have maybe buried, A loved one, People say that every single day, You think of that person, Not a single day goes by, Without you feeling something, Of the longing of being with that person again, In this world do we grieve?

Absolutely we grieve, In this world do we mourn? Absolutely we mourn, But friends, Friends, Friends, There's coming a day, When there really will be, No more grieving, No more mourning, Friends, There's coming a day, When that black cloud, That hangs over our head, That sense of just where our emotions are dull, All the time, And we just feel like, You don't want to get out of bed, There's coming a day, When that black cloud will be gone, Forever, And ever, And ever, In this lifetime, We experience in part, We taste in part, We hope in part, But one day we'll taste in full, One day we'll see him face to face, And it really will be done, There really will be no more tears, There really will be no more mourning, There really will be no more agony, No more pain, That day is coming, The day in glory, And that's why sometimes as Christians, The promises of the scripture, Can feel a little overstated,

We read God's description in the Bible, And we feel like, Yeah, I can see a glimpse of that, But gee, I don't know if that's my experience, Really, Friends, We read of the peace that God promises, The inexpressible joy he offers, And maybe we struggle to see it, Or sense it, Friends, There's coming a day, The world, Our true home is coming, When even the very best pleasures of this world, Even the most satisfying romantic relationships, Won't be able to touch the beauty, And the satisfaction, And the intimacy, And the deep joy, That is coming in our world, To come, And that brings us to the third thing, Which is, One of the greatest promises in the Bible, Longings or promises, Is that one day, We will be married to Christ our King, And so the third point is this, Heaven is going to be marked by intense, Intimacy and relationships, Look at how John, Describes our relationship with Christ, Look at verse 2 with me, He says here, I saw the holy city, This new Jerusalem, Coming down out of heaven, From God, Prepared as a bride,

Adorned for her husband, Now, Revelation isn't the only place, That talks about the church, Being like a bride, That will one day be married to Christ, Think of Ephesians chapter 5, It says, Husbands, Love your wives, In the same way that Christ loved the church, And how did he love the church?

He laid down his life for her, Right? As husbands, We've got to love our wives in the same way, Not think about ourselves, Think about our wives, But think of a bride on her wedding day, Harriet's coming, A few more months, Think of your bride on the wedding day, She's all beautifully decked out, Adorned, Looking amazing, And she meets her husband, At the front of the altar, And what do they say to each other in their bowels?

[31 : 19] They say, With all that I am, And all that I have, I give myself to you, Okay? Friends, Do you know that that's, The very best marriages, Are those in which two people, Are constantly learning, To give themselves away, For the other person, The very best marriages, Are when two people are saying, Not my will be done, But your will, With all that I am, And with all that I have, I give myself to you, Even for, When you're 50 years into marriage, I'm slowly, Very slowly, Learning this, 11 years in, That the best thing I can do, Is to give myself to my wife, Now, In, In Revelation 17, We saw, That the contrast, Is with Babylon, And Babylon is described, As a prostitute, A sex worker, In chapter 17, One to whom men go to, Please themselves, But without any sense of relationship, So, Men go to, Sex workers generally, Because of what they can get, Not because of what they can give, But in God's view, Marriage and sexual intimacy,

Is the exact opposite, Healthy marriages, The best sexual experiences, Are built on when you give yourself away, For the pleasure, And the well being of the other person, When you say, This is not about how I can please myself, But how I can please you, That's when true intimacy takes place, That's when oneness, And relationship, Takes place, And this is how a world to come, Is described, Not a world of self seeking, But a world of, Of giving ourselves away, Where Christ gave himself for us, And we give ourselves, To him, Christ our perfect husband, John Piper says it like this, Again, Jesus is a king, But he's not just a king, He's an engaged king, And soon he'll be a married king, His betrothed bride, Is the people of God, The people who trust him, From every race, And nation, The church, He came first time, 2000 years ago, To die for his bride, To pay a dowry, As it were, With his own blood, And he will come again, To marry her, To take us, His church, Into the chambers of his love, And his joy forever,

King Jesus came into the world, To ransom a wife, Not a concubine, He paid for her, With his life, And he is now at work, By his spirit, And giving, And by his word, Purifying and beautifying her, For himself, And for her joy, One of the interesting things, About the Bible's teaching, About heaven, Or our home to come, Is that it, It never describes, There being, Any sexual experiences, In heaven, Which is interesting, Because we think of heaven, As like the most amazing, Wonderful place to ever be, And in this world, What does our culture think, Is the highest pinnacle, Of satisfaction, Sexual experiences, But the Bible never actually, Describes heaven, In that way at all, In fact Jesus says, When we get to heaven, We won't be married, Or be giving, Ourselves in marriage, However, The new creation, Is not going to be a time, Of a lesser intimacy, It's going to be one, Of even great intimacy, With God, And with his people, Why?

Because we'll be joined, To our true spouse, God wasn't looking around, And saying, Let me think, What image can I use, To describe the intimacy, Of heaven? Oh yes, I'll use marriage, It's actually the other way around, God said, How can I help these people, Understand, Understand, What the joy of heaven, Is going to be like, I know, I'll create something for them, To describe what heaven, Is going to be like, I'll create marriage, And sex, As an image, As a picture, As a small picture, To show them, What one day, Heaven is going to truly, Be like, Okay, So that's, Third point, Heaven is going to be defined, Marked by intimate relationships, Finally, It's going to be marked, Or defined, By God's glorious presence, What we see, In the new heavens, And the new earth, Is going to be, Supremely occupied, By the majesty, Of God's glorious presence, In verse 10, Of our passage, That we read, John, Describes this, New heavens, And new earth, Coming down, And he uses,

Almost the exact same language, Almost word for word, That he uses in verse 2, Look what he says here, In verse 2 he says, I saw the holy city, The Jerusalem, Coming down, Out of heaven, From God, Then he says the same thing, In verse 10, I saw the holy city, Coming down, Out of heaven, From God, But in verse 10, He describes it, Not as a bride, Adorn for a husband, But as a temple, He says, Having the glory of God, Its radiance, Was like a red jewel, Like jasper, Clear as crystal, And then he goes on, To describe this city, This new Jerusalem, This temple city, And he describes it, The length, And the breadth, Except there's something unusual, About the city, He describes it, It's a thousand five hundred, Miles long, It's a thousand five hundred, Miles wide, But it's not a, Square city, It's a cubic city, It's not only long, And wide, It's also a thousand five hundred, Miles high, Look at what verse 16 says, Its length, And its breadth, And its height,

[36 : 22] Were equal, So he describes the city, That comes down, But it's a cube, It's not, 2D, Okay, Which is a very unusual, City to live in, I don't know how exactly, That works, Maybe in Hong Kong, We've got the, The best impression, Right, Of the high rise buildings, Gary, Maybe you can build us, A high rise, A thousand five hundred, Miles high, Okay, What's the significance of this, Why does, Why does John describe the city, As a cube, Remember in the Old Testament, The temple, Was the greatest picture, Of God's presence, And so, The nation of Israel, Is in Israel, They have this temple, And there's all sorts of, Compartments to the temple, There's the outer court, And then you go in, And the priests, Could go into the holy place, And then there's, A small inner chamber, The heart of the temple, Which is called, The most holy place, Or the holy of holies, Okay, And the holy of holies, Is so, Radically, Intent, With God's presence, And his power, And his authority, That nobody could go in there,

It was full of the place that, It was said, Where God's presence, And his glory, Dwelt on earth, And so you, No one's allowed into the holy of holies, Is this mic okay?

Yeah, Maybe I'm just getting a bit excited, Nobody's allowed in there, Except only one person, The high priest, Not just any priest, The high priest, He's like the pope of the priests, Okay, The main guy, And he's only allowed, In the holy of holies, Once a year, On the day of atonement, And he can only go in there, If he's offered, A whole pile of sacrifices, He's got to be like, Covered in the blood of the lamb, And so on the day of atonement, The high priest, Very tentatively, Fearfully, Goes into the holy of holies, And that's where God's presence, Is said to dwell, And it's the most fear, Provoking, Or striking place, Because if you go in there unworthily, You die straight away, And so what would happen, Is the priest would go in there, And sometimes they would tie a rope, Around his ankle, In case something happened, And he died in there, Nobody wanted to go in to fetch him, And so if he died in there, They would have this rope,

They could pull his body out, Okay, And so the high priest goes in there, Once a year, To, Offer sacrifices, Or to put blood on the altar, But there's something interesting, The holy of holies, When God tells Solomon, How to build it, It must be built, As a cube, Its length, And its breadth, And its height, Has to be equal, So what's John saying here, When he describes heaven, As a cube, And all the measurements, That he gives, Are all referring the same thing, The walls, And the gates, And the names, The apostles, And the prophets names, Are written on it, He's saying that, Here in the new Jerusalem, In this world to come, Is this fearsome glory, This awe provoking glory, Of God's presence, No longer contained, Or restrained, In the temple in Jerusalem, It's going to be characteristic, Of all eternity, Of the new heavens, And new earth, Is going to be like, That holy of holies, Where God's presence, Dwells, Remember,

For Israel, The temple in Jerusalem, Is the epicenter, Of the entire universe, That's like the navel, Of the whole world, In Isaiah, Isaiah talks about how, He says, He speaks about Jerusalem, And the temple, As this mountain, That all the nations, Of the world, Are going to flow, Upstream towards it, As it draws, All people, From all cultures, And nations, He says, Come, Let us go to the mountain, Of the Lord, To the house of Jacob, For Israel, Jerusalem, And the temple, Is the epicenter, Of the whole world, Because that's where, God's presence is, Now look at what John says here, In verse 22, He says, Then I saw, There was no temple, In the city, For its temple, Is the Lord God Almighty, And the Lamb, And the city, Has no need, For sun, Or moon, To shine upon it, For the glory of God, Gives it light, And the lamp, Is the Lamb, Jesus Christ, In other words, Friends, Just as, Sex and marriage,

[40 : 37] Is a black and white picture, Like a cardboard cut out, Excuse, Sorry to be vulgar, Of the intimacy, That's one day, Going to await us in heaven, So the glory, Of the temple, And the holy of holies, Is like a black and white picture, It's like a cardboard cut out, It's just a pathetic picture, Of the glory, That one day, Is going to await us, As we get to heaven, And be with God, And this friends, Is the reason, Why all the good promises, Of the scripture, Are found to be true there, This is why heaven, Is going to be, Astoundingly more beautiful, And astoundingly more, Infinitely more, Glorious, And rewarding, And satisfying, Than we could ever, Possibly imagine, Because ultimately, What makes our world, To come so glorious, Is not our resurrection bodies, What makes our, Glorious eternity, So wonderful, Is not the fact, That there's no more, Mourning or tears, Or heartache, Or pain or crying, What makes heaven, So glorious, Is the one who's there,

It's not what's going to be there, It's who's going to be there, It's the fact that, God's presence, Is all pervasive, One old theologian, Said it like this, It is not, It's not in heaven, That we find God, But in God, We find heaven, That's why Jesus says, In John chapter 17, He says, This is eternal life, That they may know you, The only true God, And Jesus Christ, Whom you sent, Friends, This is what glory, And heaven is going to be like, That we are, We know our God, Who made us, And we experience him, In all his fullness, But this poses, A real challenge for us, John Piper, Said it like this, Very famously, He says, The critical question, For our generation, In fact, For every generation, Is this, If you could have heaven, With no sickness, All the friends, That you ever had on earth, All the food, You ever liked, Hong Kong, That's us, Right?

All the leisure activities, You ever enjoyed, All the natural beauties, You ever saw, All the physical pleasures, You ever tasted, With no human conflict, No tears, No agony, No natural disasters, Would you be satisfied, With heaven, If Christ, Were not there?

Man, That's a powerful question, Would we be satisfied, With all the glories, That this world has to offer us, If Christ were not there? And the pervasive answer, Of the scriptures is, Not for one second, Not for one second, Because the thing, That makes heaven glorious, Is not what's there, But who is there, Coming into land, I don't know if you remember, That movie, With Leonardo DiCaprio, Called The Beach, Do you remember that movie?

There's this character, Called Richard, And he stumbles across, This idyllic, Paradise, And on this paradise beach, Are all these travelers, That are just living up the high life, And he thinks, This is the dream, This is what I've longed for all my life, Beautiful location, People having parties, This is, The stuff that dreams are made of, But pretty soon, The dream starts to unravel, And things go horribly wrong, The location is perfect, But the people that are there, Have brought their jealousy, And their selfishness with them, And what starts out as pure paradise, Ends up being a nightmare, See friends, The reality of our hearts, And in our world, Has a way of destroying, And damaging, Even the most idyllic paradises, And dreams, But not in this city to come, In the city to come, God is making all things new, In the city to come, God is going to take, Everything that is broken, And wrong with our world, And make it untrue, Jesus is going to take,

[44 : 30] Even the sin, And the selfishness of our hearts, And we're going to be transformed, Into his image in a moment, And it will be truly the home, That we've been waiting for, Friends, In Revelation 18, After describing the city of Babylon, Jesus calls his people, To come out of her, Jeremy had it up on the screen earlier, I didn't know Jeremy was going to have that, But he says, Come out of her my people, Come out of her, Jesus is not asking followers of Jesus, To leave the cities, And to become rural dwellers, He's not asking us, To leave the cities, And to become hermits, That live in the mountains, And little communes, Right?

Jesus is calling us, To find our true home, Not in the things of this world, Which are failing, And cannot really satisfy our hearts, But to come and to find our home in him, For the first century followers of Jesus, To disassociate with Rome's, Injustice and immorality and idolatry, Was a massive challenge, It meant the loss of status, It meant the loss of prosperity, It meant the loss of jobs, Loss of status in society, It is an uncertain future, And friends, For us it means probably much of the same, But here today, Jesus is presenting an alternative city, To the cities of this world, An alternative kingdom, Jesus is offering us another place of belonging, With different ambitions, And different hopes, And a different ethos, And a different moral system, Another place to call home, Friends, The culture of this world, Is seductive and alluring, In Jesus we get to discover, A true lover, Who won't just use us, And abuse us, And then spit us out, In Jesus we discover one, Who is willing to be spat upon,

We discover one, Who is willing to be used and abused, By those that he came to rescue, In order to bring us from outside, Into his home, And into his family, Friends, The greatest narrative of scripture, Is not just that we've done bad things, And we need forgiveness, The greatest narrative of scripture, Is that we were lost, And we have a true bridegroom, Who left the comforts of heaven, Who came to the ends of the world, To find us, To bring us home, And to include us part of our family, Friends, In this life, We get a mere glimpse, Of his glory and his majesty, But he's coming again, He's coming to take us back home with him, To revel in his love, Forever, And ever, And ever, This is what heaven, Is all about, Let's pray together, Jeremy, Do you want to come lead us in song, Let's, Let's come before our, Glorious father, In prayer, Lord Jesus, Heavenly father, Holy spirit, We come before you now, God, Because we confess, That we long for home,

We long for our true home, God, In this world, You give us glimpses, Of what is to come, You give us mere glimpses, God, Of the glory to come, Of the deep intimacy, That awaits us, Of our heart satisfaction, Jesus, We long for that day, And we pray, God, Won't you put eternity, Deep in our hearts, God, I pray that tomorrow, As we go into the city, And to our workplaces, And universities, And schools, And as we look after kids, And we take up projects, And challenges, And we negotiate with clients, And we talk to our bosses, God, Won't you put our hearts at rest, Won't you remind us, That this is a temporary home, But our true home awaits us, God, When we get anxious, And worry, Lord Jesus, Won't you give our hearts rest, Knowing that soon, Very soon, We'll be with you, Jesus, We long for that day, We say, Christ, Come back soon, And take us home, God, But in the meantime, Give us your spirit, Pour heaven into our hearts, We pray, That we may know you, And walk with you, All the days of our life,

We pray this in your wonderful, And your beautiful name, Amen, But where you may know you, And it's beautiful, And it's like, The mensonge, But with us, And that you, And that you, And that you love, The day you, And all the days of our character, And all the things of All myst ■ canceled are And all the deh Burning memories, And all the days of our life, And all of us, And all theations that you have everything linked, And all the days of our life, And see, Again, And all the time you see a gorgeous, And all the days of our birthday, And all the days of our life, And all the days of our meal, One of these deliciousness, And all the days of ofacion, And all the days of ourpex team,