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Quenching the Ultimate Thirst

Revelation 21:22

Prayer: *Father, we just again, we thank you for your grace, we thank you for your goodness, we thank you for all the gifts that you've given to us, as Pete said, in the very homes that we are living in and the heat that we enjoy and the food that we enjoy. Just the weekend that our young people spent just getting a taste of what most of the world lives with, we are just so incredibly blessed. We thank you for that blessing. We thank you for the additional blessing of the presence of your Holy Spirit, Lord, and we pray as we open up your word that you would give us the ability to take it in and to again make it of permanent value. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, it was January 13th of last year when we started our study of Revelation and it's taken us a little over a year to get here but we have finally reached the last chapter. Last week we looked at chapter 21 which concludes with a vivid description of what this new heaven is going to be. This is *Revelation 21:22*. It says: *And I saw no temple in the city, for its 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 it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 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.

Well as we've seen in this new heaven there's no sun, there's no moon, there's no sea, there's no night, there's also no temple at all because God is no longer contained. He is the great city of Jerusalem coming down from above and there's no longer any need for sun or moon as he is the unending source of all life and energy. The description continues in Revelation 22. This is *Revelation 22:1*. It says: *Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city.*

Now we might have a problem trying to understand just what John is trying to communicate here, I mean, we know that the experience of heaven itself will be well beyond what *1 Corinthians 2:9* says: *"What eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined"* and yet we have John giving us a very plain and a very simple

description of some geographical details of this new city. It kind of sounds like parts of Philadelphia or parts of Chicago. We see these details and they're spectacular, at the same time they seem to be rooted in space and time, the same kind of space and time that we've known for ten thousand years.

And as I mentioned before, there may well be eleven dimensions in this new city but there will also be reminders of just where mankind began. I mean, this new heaven, it's got a river flowing through the center of it that emanates from the throne of God. If you remember, the original Garden of Eden also had a river.

Genesis 2:9 says: *A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.* We need to remember here that in this new heaven God is not necessarily recreating here, he's not starting from nothing *ex nihilo*, instead he is making what is old new again.

And so this new heaven, it's got trees as well. *Revelation 22:2* says: *Also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* Well, if you remember the original garden also had trees. *Genesis 2* says: *And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.* So there's clearly a

connection between the Garden of Eden and this new heaven. What we have here really is the beginning of all things followed by the creation of Adam followed by this problem we had of the fall of Adam and sin that God thoroughly and completely resolved throughout the whole of human history by becoming one of us, living a perfect human life and then offering that life up as payment for sin.

Now we know the cross took place 2,000 years ago but the effect of God's incarnation thus far has taken tens of thousands of years to completely unfold into where we are today. And no one knows, it may take another hundred thousand years or a million years to unfold, no one knows except God. But it seems as if in this instance God is looking at the whole of human history, however long that may be, as a parenthetical pause between Eden and this new heaven. And so God goes on to say in verse 3, he says: *No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.*

Now, that simple statement that there will no longer be anything accursed, that describes a world that's so radically different from anything we have ever known. And we all know that Romans tells us in *Romans 8:22*: *The whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.* And so we know all of creation is cursed, I mean, I'm sitting here literally in front of a pulpit

that's made from a tree that was cursed and you're sitting on pews that were made from a tree that was also cursed. The very air that you're breathing has been heated by the bodies of animals who died thousands of years ago who have now been turned into natural gas, and the very sunlight that's lighting up this building is from a star that is going to burn out because it, too, is cursed.

If you're under 30 you probably don't think of yourself as being under a physical curse, but as you start to age, that curse goes from a whisper to a shout. I mean, at my age people succumbing to that curse becomes much more natural and much more normal, kind of an expected thing. They say old age is not for wimps and they're correct, I mean, the only difference that I can see as a believer who is trusting in Christ eternally is I can still look forward to a glorious future that includes this very heaven that we're talking about while the rest of the world, they just got to shrug their shoulders, maybe medicate themselves into thinking it's okay.

Everything about our world is either cursed directly or indirectly, so we really, we really have no frame of reference to even begin to understand what it's like to be in a world where -- quote -- "*no longer will there be anything accursed.*" And since our very frame of reference for things is cursed, we just wonder how in the world could we begin to even understand what an un cursed existence is

like. I mean, what will food that has never been cursed taste like? What will a body untouched by anything cursed, what will it even feel like? I don't know. I can't wait to find out.

Verse 4 goes on to say: *They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.* This may well be the greatest blessing of all that we have in store for us, and my guess is it hardly even registers with us. God is saying for the first time ever we will be able to see God's face.

I mentioned this before many, many messages before about being in the fourth grade in a Catholic grammar school. And there the nuns were trying to explain to us what their understanding of heaven was, and they basically said you're going to spend all of eternity sitting on a cloud staring at Jesus. They called it the beatific vision. They described it as the most glorious thing a human being could ever experience. And I can assure you when you're in the fourth grade and a nun tells you you're going to spending all of eternity just staring at God, you may be thinking that this is a peak experience but certainly not a good one, more like the experience of those who go to the other place than heaven. I mean, it's hard for adults to even conceive of this beatific vision. Just picture fourth graders trying to grapple with it. I don't blame the nuns, they're trying to explain something about the

beauty of seeing God's face when all of our experience of seeing God that close is nothing but terrifying. As I said last week, Moses, he asks to see God and God says, yeah, well, that will kill you.

Israelites begged Moses to keep God at a distance. This is what they said in *Exodus 20*. They said: *"You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die."* Moses begged God to come near; the Israelites begged him to stay away. It's like the most fundamental form of spiritual schizophrenia. Our greatest fear and our deepest desire is to see the face of God. And it's something we find repeated as the most fundamental desire we find in the saints of God, it's sprinkled all throughout scripture.

You know, when Job was in the throes of this hideous disaster that had become his life, he kept his hope alive by clinging to a hope for the future, and it wasn't Disneyland, it was seeing the face of God. In *Job 19*, he says: *For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God.* And again we think of that request, that one request that Moses had of God when he was up on the mountain speaking, as it were, face to face of him, in *Exodus 33*, it says: *Moses said, "Please show me*

your glory."

Well, the fact is Moses never got to speak face to face with God. We all know that at one point Moses asked God for just that, a face-to-face meeting without any barriers between him and God and then God tells him in *Exodus 33*, he says: *"I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."*

And then we have David in *Psalms 27* speaking of the passion that drives his life. He says this, he says: *One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.* And then we have Jesus, Jesus himself holding out this promise to the pure in heart in *Matthew 5:8*, he says: *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."*

So what is God trying to communicate to us here by telling us they will see his face and his name will be on their foreheads, I mean, something that was absolutely terrifying to me as a fourth grader? Well, if I told you that the peak of human experience, the source

of our greatest joy and deepest pleasure is not sex, it's not obtaining great wealth, it's not eating great food or living in great real estate or think of anything that you want that would constitute your idea of peak human experience and insert it into that definition, none of it would come close to simply seeing the face of God. For a little kid in fourth grade it was a cross between terror and boredom. Staring at Jesus for eternity, no thank you.

We have to understand what God is trying to communicate here. It's not like God doesn't know what he's talking about here, I mean, God is the designer of all life. We've said, he made eagles want to fly, he made fish want to swim, he made lions want to roar and cattle want to graze, and they all do what God intended them to do not because they have to but because they want to, because that's the way God made them. And at the very top of God's creation is the one creature that bears the image of God himself and that is human beings, and God made them with great intent and purpose. He designed them for one thing primarily. The thing that he designed them for was worship.

See, God designed us so that our maximum joy, our maximum pleasure would be found in worshiping him, not because he desperately needed some sycophants licking his boots but because he knew that the one

unlimited source of eternal joy was to be found in him and him alone.

I mean, the author of glory itself, the one who designed us to react and respond to glory with pleasure is now the endless source of that a pleasure. Again verse 4: *They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.* There's no way on earth that a kid in fourth grade could ever begin to grasp that. But again, I think of David, I think of what David was grasping at when he said: *One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.*

So again, okay, how does that work? How does that happen? Well John tells us in his epistle in *1 John 3:2*, he says: *Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.* So what God is saying here is that seeing God and being like God are somehow connected. And again we've seen this statement that Paul makes in *2 Corinthians 3*, he says: *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

And so like I said just last week, we're going to experience an unending series of complete and transformative changes all designed to increase our understanding and our ability to be partakers in the divine nature of God. God says seeing him as he really is is going to transform us step by step, with each transforming step taking us deeper in our ability to see more and more of who God is, and that process is going to continue forever. *1 Corinthians 13* says: *For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.*

Just try to imagine knowing God like he knows you. And for all of eternity God's going to be growing in you the capacity to experience and express the joy of his glory more and more.

You know, John Piper likes to say, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him." And what he's saying is exactly true, I mean, worshiping God is the greatest joy human beings could ever experience. And I know and I understand that that's a hard sell. It's a hard sell in the here and now today. And understand, Adam has a lot to do with that. You see, we were not originally designed to be fallen creatures who were fleeing from God and hiding behind fig leaves. We're also not talking about the world here. We're talking about those who have been

privileged to be called children of God. And these are folks who by the grace of God have had their sin debt paid at the cross who now stand worthy to enter heaven, the very place where God says now you can see me face to face.

In verse 6 he says: *And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place. And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."*

One of the things that marks this book, the book of Revelation and this chapter in particular is the words and the phrases that make up the doctrine of the imminence of Christ. Quote -- (He) *"has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."* *"And behold, I am coming soon."* That is the return of Christ is imminent, meaning there's nothing stopping it from happening this afternoon or tomorrow, I mean, there's no events that have to take place before Christ can appear.

And so the angel once again tells John that Jesus is coming soon. Then as we're going through this chapter we find John once again, he falls prey to the grandeur of the creature who is addressing him. Verse 8 tells us this, he says: *I, John, am the one who*

heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

If you remember, this is not the first time that John has suffered the rebuke of an angel. And if you remember just back in Revelation 19, almost the exact same thing happened once before. There we have an angel addressing John directly and John responds this way in *Revelation 19:10*, he says: *Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

So twice now, twice now John starts to worship an angel. I mean, it's a mistake and pattern that seems to repeat itself often amongst us humans. We see it again and again in scripture as we read. I mean, Peter encounters Cornelius in the book of Acts. In *Acts 10:25*, it says: *Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. Peter's horrified. In verse 26, it says: But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am a man."*

Paul and Barnabas, they heal a crippled man, they encounter the exact same error. This is Acts 14:11, it says: *And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. And Paul and Barnabas are likewise horrified. It says: But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them."*

These incidents, they point out two very basic things and that is that men have an intrinsic need and desire what they clearly perceive as something vastly superior and that this could be falsely directed towards false worship. And, you know, Jesus warned us about this repeatedly.

In Matthew 24 this is what Jesus said, he said: *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. Then if anyone*

says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' Do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

God says if those days hadn't been cut short there's no human that would have survived. And today we find ourselves surrounded by false christs and false prophets and we clearly have a predilection for false worship that affects the very best of us, including the apostle John. I mean, if the apostle John could make that mistake twice, what makes us think that we here on earth cannot easily fall prey to the subtleties of the enemy who wants us to worship anything but the real God?

The solution is to simply be on the alert. Test everything by sacred scripture, including any statements your leaders make, including us. *1 John 4* says: *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.*

You know, I spoke before about the events of this time occurring in a parenthesis and there's another parenthesis that occurs at the very beginning and the very end of this very book, the book of Revelation. And again, it all has to do with the imminence of Christ's return. Listen to what God says at the very beginning. This is what we looked at a year ago in *Revelation 1:3*. He says: *Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.* And we go to the very end where we are today and we find Christ repeating those same words. *Revelation 22:10: And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near."*

And again and again we hear Jesus saying, *"I'm coming soon", "this soon must take place", "the time is near."* Over and over again Jesus is emphasizing the imminence of his return. Folks respond to that by saying, well, you know, 2,000 years is an awful long time for a return to be eminent. Peter goes so far as to speak of the scorn that people have for Christ's return based on the fact that thousands of years have gone by thus far without it happening.

In 2 Peter 2:3 he says this, he says: *Knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, "Where is the promise of*

his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." Peter acknowledges folks have been waiting, anticipating the imminent return of Christ and yet this was over 2,000 years ago itself. I mean even back then the cynics and the skeptics, they were prattling about the fact that days and days go by and nothing seems to change. *"Ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."* Well Peter explains why and he explains why in verse 8, he says: *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

So with that reckoning it's been a little over two days since Jesus ascended into heaven. Jesus as well spoke of the imminence of his return, warning repeatedly through different stories that we're always supposed to be on guard, anticipating that his return could be literally at any moment. Jesus was directly to the point in *Matthew 24*. This is what he said: *"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming*

of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

What's so interesting about Jesus' warning here is that the faithful and wise servant, the one whom Jesus is rewarding, he's not somebody who's involved in overtly spiritual things. I've heard people say, they say, you know, "When Christ returns, oh, man, I hope I'm in church." That's not the way Jesus sees it at

all. The servant that he's commending, he's not in church, he's not singing in a choir, he's not doing any overtly religious things, he's simply doing the task that God has given him to do. Again, he says: *"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time?"*

So apparently the servant was assigned the task of cooking the meals for his household. Jesus makes his imminent return and he finds him flipping burgers or making fish tacos or making bread or doing whatever he's doing to feed his servants, and he says that's the servant who is wise and faithful.

And so we ask what does that have to do with us? What does it say to us? Well, Paul summed it all up in one sentence in *1 Corinthians 10:31*, he says: *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* He says, whatever it is you do, it can be glorious. I mean, if you want a solid way to evaluate virtually everything you do in life, ask yourself how would I feel if Christ returned while I was in the middle of doing whatever it is you're thinking of doing?

Well then the angel gives a brand new command to John in verse 10. He says: *And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the*

prophecy of this book, for the time is near." What a difference between the angel's words to John and the words that the angel spoke to Daniel about the prophesy that Daniel received.

If you recall at the end of the prophesy that the angel shared with Daniel, he is told specifically in *Daniel 12:4*: *"But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."* But here we have John being told the exact opposite. Verse 10 says: *And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near."* And that John obeyed the command to seal the words, well, that's obvious, we're here 2,000 years later studying the very document that was given to him. And so the angel goes on to say in verse 11: *"Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy."*

What that points out is that no sin occurs in a vacuum because sin begets sin. As Tim Keller once put it, "When you do sin, sin does you." The more you engage in it, the more it becomes easier to engage in. Likewise with righteousness. The more you make right choices, the more right choices become normalized.

And Jesus then says in verse 12: *"Behold, I am coming soon,*

bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." And once again Jesus is speaking of his imminence that he's coming soon, and in one sentence he states that he's going to make everything even-stein. He's bringing his recompense with him.

In other words when Jesus arrives, all bills are going to be due and payable and he is there to collect. And at that point everyone's going to receive what they deserve. For those who do evil, they receive their just punishment; for those who trust in Christ as their source of righteousness, they will receive a reward. And Jesus puts it this way in verse 14, he says: *Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.*

Right there Jesus is making it clear it's not works that give believers the right to enter the city, instead it's the fact that their robes have been washed. In other words the sin has been wiped clean by the blood of Jesus.

And what do these folks find in that city? What they find is something they have been forbidden access to ever since Adam rebelled in the Garden of Eden. You go all the way back to *Genesis*

3, it says: *Therefore the LORD God sent him -- that's Adam -- out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.*

See, the last thing that God wanted for men was to have access to eternal life in the sinful state that Adam now found himself in. Hence Adam is driven out of the garden and an angel is posted to make sure no one has access to that tree. But now notice what God is saying. Now his own, by the blood of Jesus, have the right to access to that tree. And again he points out there's going to be separation of those who have trusted in Christ and those who have not, and he says all those who have not will be outside. He says: *Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.*

So the next time somebody tells you that, you know, hell is where all the cool people are and that's where they're going to go to party, I would suggest there's probably very little partying going on down there and the company you'll be keeping there probably doesn't play nice at all.

Next Jesus himself verifies and authorizes this final book of scripture. This is what he says in verse 16. He says: *"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."* The Spirit and the Bride say, *"Come."* And let the one who hears say, *"Come."* And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

For one last time Jesus is issuing one last invitation. And once again, anyone who is thirsty is invited to come take the water of life without price. And you see, if Christ isn't in you, if you don't have the Spirit of Christ within you, you're not going to have what is an absolute requirement for heaven and that's a thirst for God. Those who are outside of the kingdom, they have no such thirst at all. This is a thirst that comes first and foremost from God himself. It's a thirst that Jesus spoke of first to a Samaritan woman, a virtual outcast in every way. This was a woman that he met by a well in Sychar, a forbidden city that Jews refused to go to through because they might have some contact with a Samaritan.

John 4:13, it says: Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I

will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Well the woman desperately wanted the water not because she had any thirst for Jesus, she just thought it was magic water, she wouldn't have to come out there every single day to fetch water to the scornful eyes of her peers. She didn't realize that the water that she was asking for was altogether different, that it would change her life forever.

Later on Jesus repeats his invitation at the Feast of Booths. Again, he repeats it to a crowd that has no interest whatsoever in slaking their spiritual thirst. This is what Jesus said in *John 7:37*, he said: *On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

Well the crowd thought Jesus was crazy for even bringing it up, but here Jesus, once again he states the essence of what's going to make heaven heaven itself. If you're one of his own it's because

God himself no longer lives in a temple but he now lives inside of you. And it's the presence of his Holy Spirit who gives us this unquenchable thirst that God says, I will spend eternity quenching. Jesus puts it simply. He says, *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."* It all comes down to Jesus' promise to us, as the thirsty ones, that we're going to have an unending supply of the water of life without price.

Jesus then follows up that promise with a warning in verse 18, he says this, he says: *I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*

See, God started with Adam. He starts with Adam and then he lets all of history as we know it play out until 2,000 years ago when he arrived on this earth in a barn in Bethlehem. And having given up all of the glory of heaven, he came to live the type of life that we were supposed to because we couldn't, because we were broken. And so he came and he did just that. He lived the perfect life and then the King of the universe allowed himself to be stripped naked and nailed to a cross just so he could secure perfect justice for

those sheep that he loved enough to die for. And having paid the price to rescue and ransom his sheep, he's now prepared to forever enjoy the fruits of his labor.

The book ends with these words in verse 20: *He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.*

You know, there's this one question that this chapter of Revelation raises, and it's the most important question you will ever ask yourself. The question is simple: Are you thirsty for God?

See, that's not something you can conjure up from within yourself. It's a gift that God alone can give. And God says we're going to spend all of eternity having that thirst broadened and deepened and quenched over and over again eternally. He also says there's going to be those outside the gate who have none of that thirst. And so the question becomes are you thirsty? And the good news is if you have no thirst, the solution's right at the tip of your tongue. It's resolved simply by asking God for that thirst. I mean, Jesus said: *"But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

And so if you have no thirst, you have only to ask God for it. It's the Spirit of God who provides the thirst. It's the Spirit of God who gives us the ability to recognize that we're broken, that we're sinful, and that Christ is our only hope and that it is his sacrifice that gives us a clean slate, making us worthy to enjoy heaven and a thirst that God's going to quench forever. Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for the book of Revelation, I thank you for the challenge that it has been, I thank you for the hope that we all have. I thank you first and foremost for giving us this thirst, for pleading with your people to want that thirst and seeing them over and over again reject it, say, not interested; sorry. Lord, what a gift it is to have that thirst and what a pleasure it is, what a privilege it is to know that that thirst will be quenched eternally. We praise you and we thank you for that. And we thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.