

Heaven

Turn in your bibles if you will to 2 Cor 4:7-5:1

Well Friends, today we have a new year before us and we look forward to another wonderful year full of blessings and mercy from our God. Another year to live and serve the Great King of Kings. Another year to rejoice in the Lord and proclaim His wonderful goodness. Another year to live in such a prosperous nation such as the USA. Another year to enjoy the freedom that God has so graciously given us. Another year to love the Lord our God with all of our heart and mind and soul and strength.

Of course the New Year will bring with it some challenges for us. As Jesus said,

John 16:33- 33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." NAS

Indeed some of the challenges that some of us will face, will be very hard to deal with and seem almost unbearable. Life will indeed present such circumstances that may just be downright to heavy to carry, to painful accept, to embarrassing to face or even seem to nearly crush us. This is the general tribulation that we suffer, just being a part of the fallen and sinful race of mankind and the kingdom of this world. As the Apostle Paul so clearly stated for us,

2 Cor 4:8-12 - 8 we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. NAS

As Jesus died because of sin, so we too partake of the consequences of sin daily. And in this world we continually suffer the grief of dying, and mourning, and crying and pain. Our few short years upon the earth at times just seem to be a great struggle, as we watch the world and its inhabitants around us perish because of sin.

But friends know this one thing. That our lives as the children of God are for a very special and holy purpose as Paul declared in Verse 11. **We partake of death in the world for Jesus sake, and for His Glory.** As the great catechisms have said, "what is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy Him forever! We have a very great purpose in the world being the very chosen people of God called to bear His name before the world, and make known the riches of His grace to all peoples. And this happens through our sufferings, through our tribulation, that the **"life of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies."** Look back at Verse 7,

2 Cor 4:7 - 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves; NAS

Friends, as you trust in and rely upon God in your suffering, His Glory is manifested through your lives, as Jesus said,

Matt 5:14 - 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. NAS

Furthermore there is great purpose in our suffering, that it should abound in thanksgiving to the glory of God.

2 Cor 4:15

15 For all things are for your sakes, that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. NAS
Not only this, but our sufferings are not even worth comparing to the tremendous privilege and fulfillment of the age to come.

2 Cor 4:16-5:1

16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. 17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 5:1 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. NAS

So, it is true. We will face many trials and toils and snares as we look to the days ahead but remember Jesus' promise, "I have overcome the world." Even as the Apostle John said,

1 John 5:4-6- 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—even our faith. 5 And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? NAS

And not only do we overcome the world friends, but we possess the world to come. It is ours, its our inheritance and the privilege of the Children of God, because of our gracious and Living Saviour. Indeed we possess all that there is, as Paul states in,

1 Cor 3:21-23- 21 So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; **all things belong to you, 23 and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.** NAS

Turn with me if you will to Revelation Chapter 21.

Friends, we have a great hope. A hope that is anchored in the unmerited favor of God. A hope freely given to us who believe. A hope that cannot be taken away from us, no matter what. Because of Christ, we shall live, even though we die. Because of Christ, we shall rejoice forever and ever and ever, world without end. Because of Christ, we shall even see God, and live in His house throughout the eons of eternity. Because of Christ, we shall enter the gates of Heaven.

Rev 21:1-7

21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, 4 and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away. " 5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." 6 And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. 7

"He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

I would like to point out just a few simple and wonderful truths about our heavenly hope for us to ponder as we look to the days ahead.

Look at verse 1.

21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

1. The first thing is that this place we now call home is going to pass away. It is going to burn friends. As Peter tells us,

2 Peter 3:10-11- 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. NAS

The Lord will remove this present world and everything in it. He will remove it and He will replace it. This heaven and earth will be replaced with a New Heaven and Earth.

Isa 65:17-66:1

17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. 18 "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing, And her people for gladness. 19 "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem, and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying. 20 "No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Shall be thought accursed. 21 "And they shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22 "They shall not build, and another inhabit, They shall not plant, and another eat; For as the lifetime of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My chosen ones shall wear out the work of their hands. 23 "They shall not labor in vain, Or bear children for calamity; For they are the offspring of those blessed by the LORD, And their descendants with them.

24 "It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. 25 "The wolf and the lamb shall graze together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain," says the LORD. NAS

Look at verse 3.

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them,

2. Secondly friends, and this is the best point of all, God will be there, even Jesus the Lord of Glory Himself. The scripture says that He shall dwell among us. Can you believe it. **The Holy God of Heaven shall dwell among us. What an awesome truth. God will make his home with us, and we shall live in His house forever.**

And if that were not enough, listen to this friends. "they shall be **His** people". We shall be God's people. The children of His household. The lambs of His pasture, the family He calls His own. There we will lie down in peace, with none to harm or trouble for He will be our God and Father.

Look at Verse 4.

4 - and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer

be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away. " 5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

3. Thirdly, there will be no more suffering in Heaven. Death will pass away. There will be no more dying. God will conquer the enemy of death once and for all. We will not even mourn. Can you imagine it! No longer any thing in the world to even cause you to have a negative feeling. No more crying. We shall not weep another tear, for God will wipe away them all. That includes them all! Every Tear shall be wiped away from our eyes. Glory!

And what about that old enemy we call pain? There shall no longer be any pain. No pain in the body. No pain in the heart. Its all going to pass away. Friends, were not gonna know what to do! No more pain, PRAISE THE LORD!

Hospital

Bills, No more bills! Hooray!

Graveyard

Monday morning

Devil, No more Devil!

Betrayal, jealousy, persecution, hunger, distress

Fourthly, Look at Verse 6 and 7.

6-And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. 7 "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

Friends, listen to these 2 words. WITHOUT COST! WITHOUT COST!

Isa 55:1-3-1 "Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters;

And you who have no money come, buy and eat.

Come, buy wine and milk

Without money and without cost.

2 "Why do you spend money for what is not bread,

And your wages for what does not satisfy?

Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good,

And delight yourself in abundance.

3 "Incline your ear and come to Me.

Listen, that you may live;

And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, NAS

God gives freely to all who thirst and come to Him! And what will He give? **The Water of Life. That you shall live and not die, that you may enjoy your God forever.**

As Paul tells us in,

Eph 2:7 - 7 in order that in the ages to come He might show the **surpassing** riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. NAS

Friends, can you imagine what are the riches of His grace in kindness to us?

It will take eternity for the infinite Holy God to show us His infinite riches and kindness forever and ever. We will never see the end of the kindness of God because He is infinitely kind.

Are you thirsty?

Friend, are you hurting?

Are you hungering?

Are you weary?

Poor Sinner!

Come to Jesus friend, and you will find REST FOR YOUR SOUL!

Jesus can heal your hurts!

Jesus can give you peace in your heart!

Jesus can give you joy, that no words can express!

Jesus can give you hope for tomorrow!

Jesus can give you life forever!

If you haven't committed your life to Christ and received Him as Lord, we want to give you the opportunity.

Friend, all you have to do is in the quietness of your heart, turn away from your sins, ask Jesus to forgive you and receive Him as your Lord and Master.

If you have committed your life to Christ and received Him as Lord, REJOICE! For Heaven belongs to you my friend! As Jesus said, BE OF GOOD CHEER! You have great reason to hope!

Why so downcast O my soul, put your hope in God!

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May your New Year be filled with the blessings of God.

And may your hearts and homes be filled with His love.