

ORDER FOR THE CORPORATE WORSHIP OF GOD
A Service of Celebration and Covenantal Renewal

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

MISSIONAL LIVING TESTIMONY—

Deacon's Fund
Deacon Tim Knight

INVOCATION—

Elder David Winningham

CALL TO WORSHIP

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth
And in Jesus Christ His Only Son, our Lord;
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, dead, and buried;

He descended into Hell;
The third day He rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
And sits on the right hand of God, The Father Almighty;
From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy catholic church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting. Amen.

WORSHIP THROUGH SONG

Lyric sheets of today's music can be obtained from the ushers upon request

PASTORAL PRAYER

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

—Pastors Scotty Smith and Scott Roley

The Present and Future of Heaven, Pt. 4
Revelation 21:1-22:6

BEING KNOWN AND KNOWING ONE ANOTHER
(Some of Our Questions about Relationships in Heaven)

I. Made and Remade for Relationships

Revelation 22:3-4 - *No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.*

John 17:3 - *Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

Revelation 21:1-5 - *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." ⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."*

GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

MINISTRY OF THE WORD, PART 2

II. Our Personal and Relational Life in the New Heaven and New Earth

Questions about what we will be like, personally, in the new heaven and new earth:

- What will we look like in heaven? How old will we be? If I die as an old man, will I be like that in heaven? Will there be babies (who died at that age) crawling around?
- Will we always remember all the evil stuff that happened in this life? Will I always remember my abuse? Rev. 21:4 – What we will remember the most is redeemed pain, not simply pain. The clearest expression of this is seen in the fact that Jesus will bear the marks of his suffering for us forever. Rev. 5:6

Questions about relationships : Revelation 21:9-21 - *“Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”* ¹⁰ *And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.* ¹¹ *It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.* ¹² *It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.* ¹³ *There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west.* ¹⁴ *The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.* ¹⁵ *The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls.* ¹⁶ *The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long.* ¹⁷ *He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man’s measurement, which the angel was using.* ¹⁸ *The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass.* ¹⁹ *The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.* ²¹ *The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.*

- In this passage, the gathered and glorified family of God are described in terms of the most sacred space and elements of Israel’s worship: the temple, the holy of holies and the garments of the high priest, in the Jerusalem temple. The implication? Our entire relational life will be a celebration of reconciliation and restoration!
- What percentage of humanity will actually make heaven? I’ve always heard the vast majority of people will not make it. I don’t like that idea. The Mathematics of Mercy: Genesis 22:17; 28:14: stars, sand and dust.
- Are there two different heavens...one for Israel and one for the church? Eph. 2:11-22
- Will we know our friends and loved ones in heaven? Will we even care or will our focus be so much on Jesus? Rev. 7:3-11- God’s people are “redeemed children”, not “Stepford Children.” God’s people are a covenant family, not a community of disconnected individuals.
- Do people in heaven know what’s going on in this world? Are my family members in heaven watching me right now? Are they praying for me? I lost my mom 4 years ago. Is she aware of me and my family? Does she know that I have children, etc... I sometimes ask God to get a message to mom, if that is possible. Do you think that is possible? Rev. 6:9-11; Luke 15:7,10; Heb. 12:1ff.
- Will we be aware of who is not in heaven? How could we not sorrow forever with that knowledge? I don’t think my mom was a Christian when she died, so thoughts about heaven don’t really comfort me. Can

you help me? Will there be sadness in heaven for those who were not believers? I realize that scriptures says there will be no more tears but I just can't get my mind around how it will be when we don't see family, friends, co-workers, etc. Romans 11:33-36 – Only in heaven will we be able to fully affirm that God has done **all** things well; for **here** we only see dimly, know partially, and worship half-heartedly(1 Cor. 13:12).

- What about people who commit suicide? I've always heard that people who commit suicide are admitting that Satan is more powerful than God. Rom. 8:31-39

SONG OF REFLECTION

Sand and Water

All alone I didn't like the feeling
 All alone I sat and cried
 All alone I had to find some meaning
 In the center of the pain I felt inside

All alone I came into this world
 All alone I will someday die
 Solid stone is just sand and water, baby
 Sand and water, and a million years gone by

I will see you in the light of a thousand suns
 I will hear you in the sound of the waves
 I will know you when I come, as we all will come
 Through the doors beyond the grave

All alone I heal this heart of sorrow
 All alone I raise this child
 Flesh and bone, he's just
 Bursting towards tomorrow
 And his laughter fills my world and wears your smile

All alone I came into this world
 All alone I will someday die
 Solid stone is just sand and water, baby
 Sand and water and a million years gone by

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MINISTRY OF THE WORD, PART 3

III. The Biggest Issue Today: Are You Known by God?

Galatians 4:9 - *But now that you know God—or rather are known by God...*

This morning has stirred up so much relational pain, longing and thirst, precisely because God has made us for relationship. Heaven, alone, will give us the full relational healing and fulfillment for which we have been made.

- But what we thirst for in relationship, more than *anything else*, is also what we dread: to be known...to be known *by God*. What would it be like to be fully exposed before the gaze of God... in all of our brokenness, sinfulness and foolishness AND simultaneously to be fully welcomed, accepted and celebrated? THAT is precisely what we receive and experience in the gospel.
- On the cross, Jesus was exposed, judged and alienated from God, so that we might be known, loved and healed. Come to Jesus, indeed. Do you know what the last command in the Bible is? "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life!" Rev. 22:17

SONG OF RESPONSE

BENEDICTION



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION:

1. What had the most impact on you today from our time in God's Word and worship? What was encouraging, convicting, and/or calling for more clarification?
2. When you think about seeing God face to face, does the thought bring more trauma or longing... or both? How so?
3. What comfort do you derive from the image of having God's name written on your forehead? Looking back on your life, how can you see how you have expected people to give you what Jesus alone can give you? What have been your "people idols"... not WHO, but in what ways have you given people power over your heart God alone deserves?
4. What relationships do you most look forward to being restored in heaven? What relationships are you not so sure about? How does the gospel bring power to desire relationship with certain people when the opposite of desire permeates your heart? Would you like your friends to pray for you about this today? Every one of us struggles with broken relationships. Can I get an "Amen!" from the others in your small group?
5. What other issues about heaven were raised by today's service of worship about which you would like Scott and Scotty to wrestle with in this series? Email them those questions!
6. Close with a good season of prayer for one another.