
“Promised Home”

JOHN 14:1-3; REVELATION 21

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BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT

Jesus left His disciples, but in doing so He went to prepare a place for us. If He went to prepare a place, He will return to bring us to that place.

In the final sermon of our three-part series, “Promise of Easter” we’re exploring the promise Jesus made to His disciples that He would come back to get them and bring to the place He is going away to prepare for them. Because Jesus fulfilled two other promises, namely to crush Satan’s head (Genesis 3:15) and to send the Helper, the Holy Spirit (John 16), we are confident Jesus will fulfill this promise, too! He is preparing for a place to dwell with Him and the Father forever. Those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life have nothing but eternal joy and fellowship with Jesus awaiting them. Jesus invites all who thirst for righteousness to drink of the water of life without payment. The only question remaining is are you thirsty?

INTRODUCTION

Good morning, Wildwood! Turn in your bibles to John 14:1-3, page 901 in the bibles in the chairs in front of you.

Today we are examining the third of three promises of Easter. The first being the promise God made in Genesis 3:15, which was fulfilled in Christ on the cross. The second being the promise Jesus made to His disciples to not abandon them as orphans, which was fulfilled at Pentecost (cf. Acts 2) when He sent the Holy Spirit. Because Jesus has fulfilled these two promises, we have good reason to believe that He will fulfill what remains.

Let me provide a bit of context before we jump into this morning’s passage. Jesus and His disciples had gathered in the upper room where Jesus washed their feet and instituted the Lord’s Supper. The mood is heavy, the setting is dark. At the end of chapter 13, Jesus prophesied that Peter, who claimed he would die for Jesus, would deny Him three times before sunrise (when the rooster crows).

This must have sent shockwaves through the group. “How could the outspoken leader of our group possibly fall away?” “Furthermore, if Peter could succumb to the pressure such that he denies Jesus, not once, but three times, how will any of us stand in the hour of conflict?” Jesus knows the heart of man. He knew what was going on in theirs. Once again, we find Jesus consoling them, even a matter of hours before His great trial, the moment for which He was born.

Again, I reiterate, Jesus *loved* His disciples. Jesus *loves* His disciples. Jesus loves *you*. And the message of the man who was about to go away is still the message of the man who is yet to return...

John 14:1 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare

a place for you? **3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.**

FAITH IS THE ANTIDOTE TO TROUBLED HEARTS

Let not your hearts be troubled is a strong prohibition against allowing fear to overcome you. You must not allow the moment to seize you. You must not be overcome by the confusion, chaos, turbulence, even when they persecute you. If Jesus commands this to His disciples, He must have ample reason. There must be real justification. Once again, we see that it is to the advantage of the disciples that Jesus goes away.

Jesus follows that statement by repeating twice the command to “believe.” **Believe in God; believe also in me.** In other words, the same trust you place in God, I want you to place in me. What else can this mean except Jesus is making a claim to be God. And rightly so, for He is. But this defeats the claim that Jesus never said He was God. Jesus says it plainly here: in the same way you believe in God, believe in me.

Rather than placing their trust in the things they are about to see, namely the arrest, trial, beating, the denial of Jesus by Peter, the crucifixion of Jesus, and His death, they are to believe, they are to put their trust, in Him. Believe that there is more than meets the eye. There is more than what your troubled heart wants to convince you. “Trust me!” Jesus exhorts His disciples.

He continued, explaining to them why their hearts should not be troubled. Let’s read **verse 2 In my Father’s house are many rooms.**

HEAVEN IS “MY FATHER’S HOUSE” WHERE THERE ARE PLENTY OF ROOMS

Now that word **rooms** is the Greek word, “monai.” (pr. moan-i) It doesn’t mean mansion as we understand mansions. This concept comes to most of us from the King James Bible. The KJV gets that idea, which many of us are quite fond of, that there will be a mansion for every believer in Heaven; like a mega-house or even a castle-like estate. We get this idea because the Latin Vulgate translates this word monai, “mansiones.” But the Greek word monai means “dwelling places.” So, if the monai are in God’s house, the ESV’s **rooms**, would be much closer to the meaning of the text here. Jesus is telling us that within the Father’s house we will have a dwelling place and there is plenty of space for us all.

Does this thought disappoint you? Do you believe that when we arrive at our dwelling place with God, where we have been set free from the penalty, power, and presence of sin, that we will not be completely overwhelmed and overjoyed at whatever we discover there? Be it a castle estate atop a grassy knoll overlooking the crystal sea or a luxurious apartment in a mega-hotel...you can be assured you will not be disappointed with your heavenly accommodations. Whatever we receive, I can guarantee we’ll rate as 5-star!

And to give absolute assurance, Jesus issues somewhat of a Jewish oath, **“If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?”**

HE PREPARES A PLACE FOR US

Jesus said **“I go to *prepare* a place for you.”** While you are being prepared for Heaven by the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, helping you know this God you call “Abba, Father,” as the Holy Spirit opens for you the Word of God so that you will really know what He’s like, how He loves you, what it means to walk in redeemed relationship with Him, Jesus is simultaneously preparing for you a place in Heaven.

Heaven will be a place perfectly suited for us and us for Heaven.

This world is not our home. As such, there are constant reminders that while all of creation was made in perfection, that was lost in the fall of Adam and Eve. We experience the effects of the fall through the hostility of the world. It's hard to live most places in the world. It's too dry or too soggy, it's too hot or too cold, it has too many bugs or too many venomous creatures, the land is not nutritious enough or there's not enough of it. The areas that are the most hospitable are also the most expensive to live because it is far too limited. Paul reminds us what we know by experience, *"For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now."* Romans 8:22

We're also reminded this world is not our home because of the interpersonal hostility. People hate one another. People kill, rob, use & abuse one another. From Cain killing his brother Abel all the way to the violence on our streets, in our schools, and homes, and just about everywhere we go, it is apparent this world is a messed-up place full of messed-up people.

We even feel the disconnect in ourselves as we struggle with discontentment, pride, lust, anger, and countless other sins that we beg God to set us free from. This is to speak nothing of the physical effects of the fall on our own bodies, like cancer, auto-immune diseases, bone-density and muscle loss, arthritis, and joint swelling to name just a few of the ailments we endure in these broken and feeble bodies.

Let not your hearts be troubled. I am going to prepare a place for you; a place that is suited perfectly for you. Have you ever taken a long, hard trip? Been away too long or endured something austere? I remember the many times I would go to the field for training or on a deployment and either sleep in open-bay barracks or on the 12" wide metal bench in my M113 Armored Personnel Carrier. I recall the days, sometimes weeks, without a shower. Nothing better than bathing with baby wipes.

The absolute best part of those trips was walking in the front door of my house. The moment I walked through the door, I knew I was home. My bed. My shower. My wife. All awaited me.

Now magnify that feeling of arriving home! That's what awaits us. Home. Not just a relatively less uncomfortable escape from an inhospitable world. But a dwelling place that has been prepared for us by Jesus; that's what awaits us! This new home will feel the way we always wished home would feel and we'll never have to leave it.

If Jesus is preparing a place specifically for us, doesn't it make sense that He will bring us to our prepared place?

HE WILL RETURN FOR US

Verse 3 continues **And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.** Not only does Jesus promise to return, and I believe like JC Ryle, this primarily refers to Jesus' second coming at the end of the age when Jesus returns in full power and brings final judgment. Yes, Jesus returned to them after the resurrection, but He did not **take them to [him]self**. And yes, Jesus returned in one sense when He sent the Holy Spirit, but again, He did not **take them to [him]self**, although He is dwelling with us *here* through His Holy Spirit.

HE WILL BE WITH US AND WE WILL BE WITH HIM

But let's not overlook what Jesus said here. Heaven is not just a place that is prepared for us, but a place we will dwell WITH Jesus forever. Many of our women just returned from their retreat this weekend. Their theme was "Abide." To abide means to remain. It means to stay close to, connected to. It means to dwell with. Right now, the challenge for disciples, men and women, is to remain connected to Jesus in a world that is constantly trying to pull us away.

Our fleshly impulses toward laziness, distraction, and the tyranny of the urgent all work together to put a wedge between us and our precious, treasured redeemer and friend. Brother and sister, **let not your heart be troubled!**

What awaits us is abiding perfectly with Christ because what is now our faith, then will be our sight!

I appreciate the word picture Gerald Borchert uses when he says in his commentary, “The teacups of our thinking and language have not even yet approached the capacity of holding the ocean of divine truth...The best we can do is to describe God’s domain in metaphors.” This is what Jesus did for His disciples the night He was betrayed to help them overcome their fear and not be overcome by it. In the same way, Jesus also gave the Apostle John a vision of our future home in Heaven in Revelation 21, page 1041 in the bibles in the chairs. Turn there with me and let’s spend the remainder of our time reading and reflecting on what Jesus showed John.

REVELATION 21:1-4

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

Whether Jesus describes a **new** creation altogether or creation *made* new, the old is gone the new has come. In 1 Corinthians 15:35-44 It is apparent that the “new” body has continuity with the old, yet is distinctly different in quality, as different as a seed is from a grain. Thus, when we consider the “new” heaven and “new” earth, we should allow for the possibility that similarly the Lord will not necessarily destroy the existing heaven and earth but rather make what exists now, new.

What shall we expect of this new creation or creation made new?

It will be our dwelling with God.

No more tears.

No more death.

No more mourning, nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

REVELATION 21:5-7

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

ARE YOU THIRSTY FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS?

The fight has been fought, the victory won. Jesus finished it on the cross! All who thirst for righteousness come and drink. Take the water of life, freely given. Life eternal awaits the one who conquers, perpetual membership in the family of God our Father.

But beware this is not going to be everyone’s reality. No, Jesus our loving, gentle, and merciful Savior says in **verse 8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers,**

the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

That list is certainly exhaustive, faithless, detestable, cowardly, idolaters, liars – that captures sinners of every variety, bar none. Jesus came not to condemn anyone to hell. He came because in our sin we are ALL condemned to hell already. He came to rescue us from it. The warnings are just that: warnings to repent, to turn, to trust, to admit your sin.

Every one of us falls into at least one of these categories and deserves **the second death**. Praise the Lord, **to the thirsty, I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment**. Grace, grace, God's grace.

Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within. Grace, grace; God's grace, grace that is greater than all our sin!

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace, Freely bestowed on all who believe! You that are longing to see His face, Will you this moment His grace receive?

Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within. Grace, grace; God's grace, grace that is greater than all our sin!

Thank you, Jesus, for your grace!

REVELATION 21:9-14

9 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. 12 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— 13 on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

LIKE A BRIDE

Jesus describes the Church as a city being introduced as a bride to a bridegroom. She is strong, built upon a firm foundation. She is brilliant, beautiful, and triumphant! She is radiant in splendor and perfection. She was made ready for this moment. Made perfect by the blood of the **Lamb and** washed by the water of the Word. (cf. Ephesians 5:26)

Like costly, amazing **rare jewels**, the beauty of the city, which represents all those whom Jesus' has redeemed and made righteous, shines in **radiance**.

This city is protected with a **great high wall**, with guarded **gates** all around named after the nation of Israel, God's chosen people, founded on the **teachings of the apostles**, secure from all disaster and calamity. Secured by the promises of God which were fulfilled in Christ and declared in the Gospel.

REVELATION 21:15-21

15 And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. 16 The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. 17 He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. 18 The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, **20** the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh [pr. Kris-oh-light]chrysolite, the eighth [pr. barrel] beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth [pr. Cry-soh-praise] chrysoprase, the eleventh [pr. jazz-synth] jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. **21** And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

Magnificent, majestic, huge, and awesome. This is our opulent, majestic Kingdom. Ours in Christ.

The dimensions of 144 cubits and 12000 stadia might be actual dimensions. That would be walls 216 feet thick and a city measuring 1380 miles long, wide, and high. Now consider the **twelve gates**, the **twelve foundations**, the **twelve names** of the **twelve apostles**. All of these are multiples of 12, which signifies completeness, perfection, and authority. I believe Jesus is less concerned about revealing the size of the city, because frankly what does it mean that a city is 1380 miles high, or 7 million feet?

Rather, I believe Jesus is showing our finite minds that this new dwelling place is going to be perfectly protected, perfectly governed, and perfectly suited for our habitation in every possible way. Imagine living in a place and having zero needs, lacking nothing. In light of the “new,” the old habitation of humanity will be seen for what it is – an inhospitable broken world. It will be obvious to us then why this world is not our home and why it is so foolish to cling to it as if it were.

REVELATION 21:22-27

22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. **23** 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. **24** By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, **25** and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. **26** They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. **27** 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.

There is no temple because we will be in God's dwelling place. There will be nothing that prevents us from fellowship with Him. There will be no need for a sun or moon because His glory will give the light – just as it did in the beginning on Day 1. And the source of that glory is the lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

Even **kings of this earth will bring their glory into it**. They will yield themselves to the King of kings and Lord of lords. The glory will never fade and the light will never be dimmed. There will be no darkness and there will be no evil, nor anyone who does evil... **only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.**

Only those who have trusted in Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, who have themselves recognized the full depravity of their sin and confessed their sin, crying out for forgiveness will inhabit our new home.

YOUR HEART AND YOUR TREASURE UNITED AT LAST

Brother and sister in Christ, **Let not your heart be troubled!** Jesus is away right now but He is away preparing a place perfectly suited for you and He is preparing you to be perfectly suited for the place. You are going to face tribulation in this inhospitable world, but that only serves as a reminder this world is not your home. No, Jesus is preparing your home. Your home. Where you will spend all of eternity in the glory of the Son of God. And He is not only preparing the place for you to

dwell forever, but He Himself will dwell with you there forever, too. You will walk with and talk to Jesus face-to-face.

Your heart and Jesus, your treasure, will be permanently and perfectly united.

Part of the preparation Jesus had to accomplish for that to be so was the work He did on the cross. It was there that Jesus secured the means by which man is saved, Jesus' substitutionary atonement on the cross. It was there that your sin debt was paid.

“It is done!” Jesus says, **“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.** Now the only question that remains is are you willing to drink of the water of life?