

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, May 8th, 2022
Rev. Gerry Gallant**

**The Tribulation Saints
Forth Sunday of Easter
Revelation 7:9-17**

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Along with all those in heaven, let us cry out together:

Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!

Along with the redeemed, let us praise God with joyful hearts:

For this reason, we come before the throne of God and worship the Lord day and night.

Called together by the Holy Spirit, let us rejoice and sing:

We will hunger and thirst no more. The Lamb will guide us to springs of the water of life.

Let us worship God!

Prayer of Adoration

God of the ages, God of today,

You are compassion, our cup overflows.

You are hope; you lead us into green pastures.

You are truth; you lead us beside quiet streams.

You are life; you restore our souls.

Morning, noon and night, O God, you are the source of our joy.

We gather to worship you as one family of your people,

honoring you as our Creator,

trusting you as our Saviour,

celebrating you as the Spirit who gives us life. Amen.

Opening Hymn # 382: "Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart" (V 1, 5)

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart,
 wean it from earth, through all its pulses move.
 Stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou art,
 and make me love thee as I ought to love.

Teach me to love thee as thine angels love,
 one holy passion filling all my frame:
 the baptism of the heaven-descended Dove;
 my heart an altar, and thy love the flame.

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

**Righteous Father,
 we who own more than we use,
 proclaim more than we experience,
 and request more than we need,
 come asking your forgiveness.
 We seek your salvation, then act like we save ourselves.
 We beg your forgiveness, then repeat our errors.
 We experience your grace, then act defeated.
 We rely on your power, but only in hard times.
 We have become confused and misguided.
 Forgive our every defection.
 Bring us to an unbroken commitment
 and a steady trust,
 through Jesus Christ, who is the way of hope,
 the truth of God,
 and the life of love,
 now and always. Amen**

Assurance of Pardon

God demonstrates his own love for us in this:
 While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
 Since we have now been justified by his blood,
 how much more shall we be saved
 from God's wrath through him!

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
 Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread.
 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the Evil One.
 For Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory,
 Forever and ever. Amen.**

Responsive Reading

Question 29. Did God break the covenant with Israel?

No. Though grieved and angered by the people's sin, God continued to love Israel and remained faithful to the covenant. In grace and patience, God gave kings to rule in justice, priests to offer atoning sacrifices and prophets to proclaim God's Word. The people were called to repent and to return to God.

Isa 65:1-2, Hos 11 2-3, Ezek 16:59-60, Hos 14:1

Question 30. Did the people turn back to God?

No. They continued to break the covenant and the law. The people hardened their hearts to the message of the prophets, rejected their summons and even acted violently against them. In a severe judgment, God handed them over to enemies who devastated the city of Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and took many of the people into exile in a foreign land.

Jer 7:25-26, 2 Chr 36:15-16

Question 31. How then did God keep covenant with Israel?

God sent prophets to them announcing a message of comfort and hope, a promise of return and reconciliation. Jeremiah proclaimed the hope of a new covenant where the law would be written on people's hearts. Isaiah spoke of a Servant of the Lord who would free the captives and suffer for their sins. Ezekiel prophesied that Israel would be resettled on its own soil; God's Spirit would dwell in their hearts, and they would know that God is God.

Isa 40:1-2, Jer 31:31-33, Isa 53:5

Music Ministry: "Jesus All For Jesus" by Choir

Prayer for illumination

Let us pray,

Blessed are you, Lord God Almighty, King of the universe. In the beginning your Spirit breathed life into the creation, and you continue to renew the face of the earth. Your Spirit breathed life into the Scriptures, and we pray you will continue to speak your

Word to us. Your Spirit breathes peace and comfort to the entire world, and we pray you will enact that among us today. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen

Scripture

Revelation 7:9-17

A Great Multitude from Every Nation

⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ¹¹ And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

¹³ Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" ¹⁴ I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁵ "Therefore they are before the throne of God,
and serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;
the sun shall not strike them,
nor any scorching heat.

¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of living water,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Children's Hymn: "Jesus Strong and Kind" by the Sunday School Kids

Sermon

As we continue our trip into the Book of Revelation this Easter season, we are going to jump ahead to one of the parenthetical passages. The seventh chapter of the book of Revelation appears in the midst of the time of tribulation. That period of the future when the world is being dominated by the anti-Christ and his minions and when Christians are being persecuted and pushed out by the world and its people.. This parenthesis is a vision of what happens after

the tribulation even though the chapter appears in the midst of the description of the tribulation.

It is these parenthetical visions that make the book of Revelation difficult to read for many people. The book does not read like a novel, or even like any of the other books of the Bible. These Parenthetical passages are set outside of the timeline as it occurs, the book of revelation is not chronological, and these glimpses of other times are meant to give John, and through him us, a better understanding of God's ultimate plan.

In the beginning of chapter seven John introduces the 144,000. The redeemed tribes of Israel, 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of ancient Israel. The we are told of the great multitude from every nation, from all tribes and people and languages. The gentiles, those of us who were not born into the tribes of Israel. This great multitude of peoples is seen sitting in front of the throne of the lamb, clothed in white and praising and worshipping God.

These are the tribulation saints; these are those people who did not have faith when the rapture occurred and suffered through the time of tribulation. They are the ones who were persecuted and martyred by the anti-Christ. They are saved and they will gather around the throne of the Lord our God to praise and worship him along with everyone else who has found salvation.

For those of you who are wanting to know and understand this better I suggest joining us for the bible study on the book of Revelation where we will go into the rapture, the tribulation and the multitude of visions that take place in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 7:9-10

⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

These are the blessed martyrs, the tribulation saints, those who held true to their faith through all of the troubles and persecution they experienced during the time of tribulation. Those who refused the mark of the beast. These are the ones that are prophesied of in the book of Daniel.

Daniel 12:1

12 "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

This should be a great relief to all Christians, even when the world is at its very worst and the anti-Christ is at work making the lives of believers as difficult as they will ever be, our God is there, and he will save everyone who believes in Him. No Christian needs to worry about their final destination. Every true believer can rest assured that regardless of what is happening in the world around them that they will receive salvation and be granted eternal life in God's kingdom by his grace. These tribulation saints are meant to give us hope in a world that has turned away from God.

Just like those tribulation saints all of us can have hope. The book of Revelation explains how the time of tribulation will be a time of terror and suffering like the world has never seen, and if they are willing to hold true to their faith, they will receive salvation. If they are willing to endure the hatred of the world, endure persecution and perhaps even martyrdom they will get something worth far more than the things that this world has to offer.

Everyone of these tribulation saints that sit around the throne has suffered the unimaginable evil of the world, they have endured some of the most horrible deaths that the anti-Christ can devise. They have been beaten, hung, tortured, burned and worse, and in the end, they have died for their faith. Yet here they are in heaven, having received their salvation. Even after all they have endured, they feel that they are called to praise and worship God for their salvation. They thank God for the grace and mercy he has given them.

And the number of tribulation saints are beyond counting. This could be a reference to the promise that God made to Abraham, that his descendants would be as numerous in the stars in the heavens.

Genesis 15:5

⁵ And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

And as the sand on the seashore

Genesis 32:12

¹² But you said, 'I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'

These are the people who come to faith during the time of tribulation, a number beyond counting. All joining the kingdom of heaven because of the grace of God.

They are not only innumerable, but they are also 'from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages.' These are the followers of Christ, one people, one nation, who have come together to worship and praise the one God. They have given up the things of this world, the ways in which the world seeks to divide, they do not see Jew or Gentile, male or female, master,

or slave, they simply see Christians, a people who have become one, a people who have suffered together through the worst and stayed true to God.

And it is in victory, in their refusal to give into the ways of the world, and in their desire to adhere to God's commands, that this multitude has been gathered into the presence of God and the Lamb. These people are the souls that John had seen under the altar when the fifth seal was opened.

Revelation 6:9

⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.

They have moved from being under the altar into the presence of God, where they are clothed in white robes and carrying palm branches. They are not battered and worn from the persecution and suffering that they suffered while living through the tribulation, there are not beaten, bloodied, and bruised from their martyrdom. They are clothed in white robes, robes that signify victory, when a Roman general won a battle, they would put on clean white robes to signify their victory. The white robes that signify Christ's victory over the cross and over death, the devil and sin, the robes that symbolize Christ's Righteousness. The palm branches they carry also symbolize their victory. They waved palms when Jesus came into Jerusalem to recognize their king. And here they are gathered in front of the throne dressed in white robes of righteousness and waving palm fronds of victory. Celebrating the defeat of the devil, of death and of sin. And these martyrs, these people who grasped onto their faith are seen standing in the innermost circle of heaven, around the throne of God and taking part in the worship and praise of the Lamb, Jesus Christ.

They worship and praise the Lamb, not because of their own personal victories, but because of the Lamb. They know they were not saved because of anything they had done, but instead because of the grace of God, because they were sealed by the Holy Spirit. They are praising and worshipping because they know it is God who had brought them through the persecution and sufferings they have experienced in life, and it is His Glory in which they are now sharing.

God the great saviour, the deliverer of His people, the only one who is capable of granting salvation to His people. The God who does not simply help people to endure the troubles and trials of life, but instead gives them victory over them in their eternal lives.

They recognize that the victory that they are experiencing is not because their God saved them from troubles but walked with them through the troubles. Christianity does not make your life easy, but it does make it great. We should not be looking for God to save us from all the times of trouble we have in our lives, we will have trials and tribulations, we will experience hardship and defeat, persecution, and suffering. We will go through all of these things and we know

because of this vision of these saints that if we can endure our faith through the times of trouble and distress we face in our lives, if we can resist the temptation to give into the ways of the world, if we remain true to God, true to the scripture, we will come out in Glory with these saints celebrating our God in his Kingdom at the end of times.

This multitude of martyrs of the time of tribulation were saved from the worst time in human history, because they placed their trust in Jesus Christ, they trusted in the lamb of God and obeyed his word.

They were saved by the grace of God, and they are singing, crying out in praise and adoration to the Lamb of God, to celebrate the salvation he has given them through his grace. They are fully aware that they are not in heaven because of anything that they have done, they are not there because they were persecuted, they are not there because they suffered, they are not there because they endured the tribulation, they are not there because they accepted their loss of fame, status, power, and wealth because of their faith, they are not even there because they suffered the atrocities of the tribulation. They worship and praise God because they know they are there because of the Lamb of God and their trust in him as their saviour.

Salvation for the debt of sin only comes through the blood of Jesus. Suffering saves no one, martyrdom saves no one. We are saved by the blood of Christ alone, because of the death upon the cross, and our trusting in him and obeying him.

Rev 7:11-12

¹¹ And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

Circles upon circles of worshipers, all of those in heaven, gathered around the throne, praising, and worshiping. The outermost circle made up of angels, unfallen angels, the ones who will never know the joy of salvation, however they celebrate with joy the return of every person who is lost when they come to faith in Christ as lord and saviour.

Next, we see the twenty-four elders and closer still are the four living creatures, but that innermost circle, the ones who are closest to God are the white-robed martyrs – the children of God who have been redeemed – the only ones who can truly understand the praise and the glory that should be offered to God because of the salvation he offers his people.

The angels, the elders, and the creatures all cannot fully understand what salvation means, the humans, the children of God are the only ones who can understand the true gift of God's grace and mercy, so while the martyrs sing and shout out their praise, the angels, elders, and creatures share in God's glory by adding their amen.

They sing their own song of praise adding to the glory and worship of God, worship of the lamb, with every word because he is the only being worthy of their praise and worship. Every member of the host of heaven is gathered in praise and worship, to bring glory to God. No one is silent. All are gathered to worship and praise God as he is meant to be praised **'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.'**

What a powerful verse, the seven aspects of God all mentioned in the praise and worship of Him that is our saviour. All the hosts of heaven offering themselves in praise and worship.

The begin with the blessings, all God things in life come from God. All of creation should be praising God because of the blessing of creation, the blessing of life we have each day, the blessing of family and friends and all he provides for us in life.

The glory of God. The whole multitude recognizes that God is the only source of salvation, the only source of victory. No one is the heavenly host is silent. It is Gods grace that brings salvation into mans life, and for this reason it is right to glorify God. Everyone collected at the throne, the whole heavenly host is gathered and worshipping. The recognize God as the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords and for this reason all glory must be given unto him.

The wisdom of God, He is the source of all truth, the giver of all knowledge. Men can only find wisdom by seeking it out through training or by trusting in the will of God and waiting on his divine wisdom. The truth is that we need both in this world, it is too often that we trust in our own wisdom and fail to wait upon the divine wisdom of God.

The offer their thanksgiving to God. It is his grace that brings salvation and righteousness before God. It is his grace that saves us, it is his will that sustains us and his blessings that care for us on this earth. We are thankful because he is the creator and sustainer of all things in the world.

They give him honor. Our God is meant to be worshiped. Too often people of the world forget that God is not a magic genie that we turn to when we want something. Instead, it should be the other way around, we should be going to God and offering ourselves to him for all that he has already given to us, and for the ultimate gift he will provide for us in our salvation.

The recognize the power of God. God's power is infinite, his wonders never cease, his miracles abound every day in the beauty of the world around us. He is the one in ultimate control of all of existence and it is his purpose that will be carried out. His kingdom will indeed come.

Finally, they speak of his might. Christians can also trust in the might of the Lord. There is nothing in this world that he cannot provide us the strength to endure, the perseverance to make it though. Those gathered in the innermost circle of worship in the host of heaven understand this fully. They have gone through the worst of the worst, and they truly worship God for the strength he provided them to make it through tribulation.

Amen and Amen. These are the attributes of our God and the reasons we must praise and worship him in our lives here on this planet and eternally when we join him in his kingdom.

Revelation 7:13-14

¹³ Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" ¹⁴ I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Then an elder turns to John and asks him if he knows about the ones in white and where they have come from. He then answers his own question. I find this very interesting, the elder knew who they were all along. He asked the question so that he could take the time to explain to John who they were. He asked the question to create a situation where he could teach.

This is what we are all called to do in our life. To create situations where we can teach others about the Glory of God. This elder does it in such a simple way, he asks a question that leads him into the chance to tell John of this multitude. To tell him that they are indeed the tribulation saints, not the church that was taken up in rapture, but instead the ones who suffered under the anti-Christ. He wanted John to know even though he is in the midst of this horrible vision of the tribulation, of the suffering that those in the world will need to endure, that ultimately it will end with them celebrating and worshiping God for their salvation in heaven. In the end Jesus wins. They have been saved by the blood of the lamb.

They are the one who have come out of the tribulation. They experienced the worst things possible and not they are in heaven, in the presence of God where they are no longer subject to suffering or death, where they will no longer thirst or hunger. These are the ones who refused the mark of the beast, who held to the testimony of Jesus even when the world persecuted them and have received the promise of deliverance and salvation at the end of the age of tribulation.

Again, we see white robes emphasized. In the ancient world robes were the common form of apparel. And one would never approach the throne of a king or the alter of God in dirty robes. When people were baptised into faith the often were given fresh robes to wear as a symbol of the new life.

All through the scripture we are presented with the image of man in stained garments.

Isaiah 64:6

**⁶ We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.**

Sin is the stain we all wear. It has stained us all as it has stained every human who has walked the earth. God wants to wash away the stains and see us clothed in clean clothes.

We see this over and over in the Old Testament. In Zechariah.

Zechariah 3:3-4

³ Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. ⁴ And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments."

In Exodus.

Exodus 19:10-14

¹⁰ the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow and let them wash their garments ¹¹ and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. ¹² And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, 'Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. ¹³ No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain." ¹⁴ So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments.

It is the essence of Psalm 51

Psalm 51:1-7

**¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!**

**³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
and blameless in your judgment.
⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,**

and in sin did my mother conceive me.
⁶ Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
 and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
 wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Isaiah tells us that our garments-stained scarlet by our transgressions will be as white as snow

Isaiah 1:18

¹⁸ “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD:
 though your sins are like scarlet,
 they shall be as white as snow.
 though they are red like crimson,
 they shall become like wool.

And Paul tells all that have come to Christ that they have been washed and sanctified in him.

1 Corinthians 6:11

¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

This is the picture of man that is presented all through the scripture, a man who had stained his garments with sin and who will be cleansed by the grace of God. It is the grace of God and the sacrifice of his son, the blood of Christ which makes us clean.

In the modern world blood is related to death, we relate the loss of blood, we remember the blood on the cross and the death of Christ. When his blood stops flowing and ebbs away his life is gone. To the Hebrews blood was life. The Israelites would not eat meats which still had blood in them. To them it was blood that sustained life, and that blood that life belonged to God and that blood must always be sacrificed back to him. To Christians in the New Testament though the blood of Christ symbolizes both death and life. The blood that Christ shed upon the cross proves all of what he did for us in his life, in his death and in his resurrection.

Christ's Blood cleanses us from sin:

1 John 1:7

⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

It is through the blood we are justified and saved from the wrath of God

Romans 5:9

⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

It is through the blood we are redeemed

Ephesians 1:7

⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

And it is his blood which calls us away from the things of this world and onto the things of Serving God.

Hebrews 9:11-14

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

This is the power of the blood of the Lamb. These blessed ones who are gathered around the throne at the center of Heaven have had their garments, their robes washed clean by the power of blood of the Lamb of God.

The stand in victory! The blood of the Lamb cleans us from the stain of the sins of our past, the stains be created by the sins of our present and the stains of all future sins in our lives. The blood of the Lamb has given these tribulation saints purity and victory over the things that would take them away from God. So, they worship and praise him.

Rev 7:15

¹⁵ "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

They serve him day and night in his temple.

In the Old Testament the Levites served in the temple day and night.

1 Chronicles 9:33

³³ Now these, the singers, the heads of fathers' houses of the Levites, were in the chambers of the temple free from other service, for they were on duty day and night.

And in heaven we see the heavenly host gathered and offering themselves to God in the same way – day and night. Continuous and unceasing worship and praise being offered to God. Unlike earth where we limit worship to churches and other places of worship and to certain days and times, all of heaven is God temple and he will be worshiped in all places at all times.

And 'He who sits on the throne will shelter them with His presence.' He will shelter them; he will protect them from all of the terrors that existed in the fallen world and all of the horrible experiences that each of them had to endure during the time of tribulation.

This multitude of worshippers standing before the throne of God is made of the rejected from earth during the tribulation. The ones who stood for truth when the anti-Christ ruled the world and the lies and ways, he promoted were the laws of man. They are the ones who have been saved from the worst possible time of human history, so they sing their praises to the Lord, joining their voices in with the rest of the voices in heaven. They are blessed as they get to stand close to the throne of God serving him and God will take care of all of their needs for all of eternity.

Revelation 7:16

¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.

This is one of the rewards that all of Gods faithful shall receive and we should find comfort in this, regardless of our situation in life. This is more than just a meeting of physical needs; it is a meeting of all of our spiritual needs in God. This is a promise that is repeated all throughout the scriptures. Jesus often teaches of how are needs will be met in God.

He does this when he teaches the crowds gathered around him near Capernaum

John 6:35

³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst

With the woman at the well

John 4:13-15

¹³ Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ 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.”

When he is at the feasts of Booths

John 7:37

³⁷ 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. ³⁸Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ ”

All of it rooted in the Old Testament in the book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 49:10

**¹⁰ they shall not hunger or thirst,
neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them,
for he who has pity on them will lead them,
and by springs of water will guide them.**

This promise had an incredible strong meaning for the multitude of tribulation saints gathered near the throne. They had come through the tribulation, the time when people could not buy or sell without the mark of the beast upon them. This means that those who would not receive the mark could not buy food and water, and those who received it could not receive eternal salvation. They would also be forced to survive out in the world, they could not rent a place to live, or buy a house, or pay for utilities. They are going to be forced out of society, to become the homeless, the persecuted forced to find whatever means they can to survive. They are going to be given the opportunity to stop all the suffering, to be given food, water, shelter, and respect if they simply give up their faith and received the mark of the beast. Yet these people endured the time of tribulation, because the suffering they faced on earth at the hands of the anti-Christ is a small price to pay for the enjoyment of the eternal life they will receive in heaven with the lord.

During the tribulation, regardless of how hard the anti-Christ makes life for believers in God, no matter how many tricks, trials, and tortures he creates to force people to turn from God, there will be a group that will recognize the anti-Christ for who he is and they will be saved because they refuse the ways of this world that he created and instead hold onto Gods word and Gods promises. The path to salvation has always been the same: Faith in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

There will also be a multitude who will chose to follow the anti-Christ, they will choose the mark of the beast because it is easier for them in this world. They will conform to the ways of the world and not stand up for God or for His teachings because they value the ease of life more, the things of this world more, power, fame, wealth, acceptance. They feel that it is more important to be citizens of this world that citizens of Gods eternal kingdom.

Revelation 7:17

**¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of living water,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”**

The Divine shepherd will lead all who have faith, all who believe in him to the foundation of living water. Water is the sustainer of life, we can go for over a month without food, yet only 3 days without water. In ancient Israel water was an incredibly valuable resource, wells were spread out and shepherds had to move their flocks between them to survive. God is going top do that for all of his sheep, the Divine shepherd will lead each of his sheep to the living water, the water that is spoken of in the psalms.

Psalms 23:2

**² He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.**

And perhaps the greatest thing we can all look forward to in the Kingdom of Heaven comes here in the last verse. Our God will wipe away the tears from every eye. In his eternal kingdom there will be no more pain, no more sorrow, no more suffering. In the presence of our Lord, we will feel no need to cry out of anguish, the same way in which he nourishes our physical needs through the living waters He will comfort our hearts. This should comfort our hearts here on earth, Our God is with us, he will never abandon us, and even when things seem unbearable, we can live with the knowledge that it will soon pass and we will be in his kingdom, having all of our needs taken care of in his living waters.

Those who go through the tribulation will suffer more than any of us will ever be able to understand, our pain, suffering and sorrows will seem trivial to those who live under the rulership of the anti-Christ. This should give us comfort, if they can endure all of the pain, suffering, persecution, and sorrow presented to them in their lives we can persevere in our faith through the pain, sorrow, persecution and suffering in our lifetime and join them in the eternal kingdom of God where we will have all of our physical and emotional needs met by our Divine Shepherd.

This is what we need to remember as we walk out into the word today.

‘God will wipe away every tear from their eye’

Brothers and Sisters, it is my hope and prayer that each and everyone of us would remember this verse from the book of revelation, this promise that is given to those who will undergo the worst forms of suffering ever known to mankind, that our God will be the one to tenderly wipe away the tears from their eyes. This should bring you comfort, all the suffering we have in this life, whether it is physical, emotional, or spiritual will one day end and on that day, we will go into the presence of God, where we will receive the greatest blessing of all, a loving God who will provide us with the living waters and wipe away the tears of all our trials in this life. There will be a day when all the troubles of this world pass away and when God will remove every cause of pain, sorrow and suffering from our lives. Amen.

Let us Pray,

Like Your Only Son in Suffering and Glory

Lord God, heavenly Father,
 in your fatherly goodness
 you allow your children
 to come under your chastening rod here on earth
 that we may be like your only Son
 in suffering here
 and in glory hereafter.
 Comfort us
 in temptations and afflictions
 by your Holy Spirit
 that we may not fall into despair,
 but that we may continually trust
 in your Son's promise
 that our trials will endure but a little while
 and will then be followed by eternal joy.
 In patient hope,
 help us overcome all evil
 and at last obtain eternal salvation;
 through your Son,
 Jesus Christ, our Lord,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one true God, now and forever.

Source: d. 1549, Easter 4, Jubilate

Music Ministry: "Steal Away" by Don McLeish

Invitation to Offering

Offering

Presenting our tithes and offerings is an act of worship. I want to encourage you to write a cheque and drop it in the mail to the church using your envelope, if you have one. (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 161, 1 Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 3E3). We also have another option for you for giving and that is you can make an e-Transfer. This note from our treasurer:

E-transfers are now accepted. Please note the new email address for this purpose only. standrewspert offering@gmail.com If you have an Offering Envelope #, please include it in the message section of the INTERAC transfer page you fill in. If you wish any part of your donation to go to a specific fund (e.g., Presbyterian Sharing) please mention this in your message.

Offertory Prayer

Creating God,
all good things come from you:
food and drink, memory, and hope,
forgiveness of sin, adoption as your children.
Through your Spirit nourish us with these gifts,
that we may be signs of your grace in the world.
With grateful hearts we offer our hearts and lives
to you, the giver of every good and perfect gift,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Closing Hymn # 370: "Hallelujah! Sing to Jesus" (V 1, 3)

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus;
his the scepter, his the throne;
Alleluia! his the triumph,
his the victory alone.
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion
thunder like a mighty flood:
"Jesus, out of ev'ry nation
has redeemed us by his blood."

Alleluia! King eternal,
thee the Lord of lords we own:
Alleluia! born of Mary;
earth thy foot stool, heaven thy throne.
Though within the veil hast entered,
robed in flesh, our great High Priest,

thou on earth both priest and victim
in the eucharistic feast.

Pastoral Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
You came to us bearing God's love,
to walk with us as our Good Shepherd,
showing us how to love each other.
Today we turn to you with our hopes and concerns in these uncertain times.
Draw near to us and to all those for whom we pray,
so that your love will be known in our world this day.

Lord Jesus,
we pray for the families we belong to.
We thank you for parents, grandparents and great-parents,
for the generations who started our families and all they gave to us.
Today we thank you for all those who mothered us,
grateful for their care and guidance.
We pray for mothers throughout the world,
thinking especially of mothers in Ukraine and other places of conflict,
worried for their children and the future.
Strengthen every care-giver's hope and courage by the power of your Spirit,
and create peace in the world so children can grow up in safety.

Lord Jesus,
we pray for families in our community and around the world
in these uncertain times.
We remember families in need:
those struggling with economic upheaval and the high cost of living,
those who know sorrow because someone has died or gone away,
those who live in pain or fear or face discrimination.
Surround these families with your love and courage.
bring them support from their neighbours,
and guide each child and young person into the future.

Lord Jesus,
We pray for the family of nations in this time of threat and conflict.
Change the hearts of leaders bent on destruction or conquest.
Give wisdom and courage to those who seek justice through negotiation,
and protect all those who offer themselves in aid and advocacy work.
Bring peace with justice to this troubled world.

Lord Jesus,
We pray for each other and for our church family.
We give your thanks for the friendship and fellowship we share
and the unique gifts each one brings to our life together.
Rekindle our energy for ministry and mission
and show us our path into the future.
Make us a beacon of hope in your name.

Lord Jesus, you are our Good Shepherd,
guiding us through dark valleys and green pastures.
We thank you for your presence with us in all times and situations
and we offer all our prayer to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one true God, now and forever. Amen.

Benediction

May the grace of God,
freely given through Christ, our Lord,
and sufficient for all our needs,
and may the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
who testifies with our spirit
that we are God's children,
guide and sustain us this day
and forever. Amen.