

*Jesus Came -
To Make All Things New*

Revelation 21:1-8

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So, it's official.

Apparently I'm now eligible to apply for Greypower Auto Insurance.

And I will save all kinds of money because of my clean driving record, which,
they say,
is a result of years of experience and good driving habits.

Not sure my family would agree.

However, there are a few tips that I picked up over the years. Which have helped me avoid the other guy - you know, the crazy one going through the red light while texting his girlfriend.

Here's the one driving tip that has helped me the most:

Look forward...

Don't be focused only on the stuff happening right around your vehicle.

Look forward a couple of city blocks, if possible. That way you can anticipate what may be happening long before you get there.

Look forward.

Which is, I want to suggest, also a helpful strategy for living - no matter what the part of life you may be considering.

Live in anticipation of where things are going, not just living for what's happening
right around you
right now.

With that in mind, join me in reading a truly "**Looking forward**" passage from the bible.
Looking forward to the very last day of human history as we know it.

REVELATION 21:1-8, p.259 (New Testament)

Don't just live for what's happening right around you right now.
Look forward.

There's one of two things that I've noticed happens to people when they pay attention only to what's happening
right around them
right now.

One of two things.

EITHER

They get very distracted by all the great stuff that happens, and by the really busy but good lifestyle they experience.

OR

They sort of give up, lose optimism and become somewhat bitter or cynical about life in general.

I can't even begin to tell you how many people I encounter who live what is, for all intents and purposes, a truly charmed life in this town. Nice home. Great spouse. Couple of good looking kids. Bit of cash in the bank. Good career. Involved in a sports team. Healthy.

Then when we get into the "*Hi, what's your name and what do you do for a living*" conversation, and they discover that I'm a pastor,
conversation shuts down or diverts **real** fast
and the by now very familiar look I get is "*Don't get goin' on me; save that for my grandmother.*"

There's absolutely no interest in any conversation about the spiritual dimension of life.

And there's no consideration about what happens after and beyond this physical life.

And sometimes not much consideration for life on a larger scale - like how our living affects other members of the human family or creation, or about a sense of vocation or whatever.

They're distracted.
Which is the **either**.....

OR.....

People get cynical. Tired and fed up. Don't trust nobody. Sky is always grey in their universe. Glass always half empty. Bitterness can set in.

It can turn into a - "*Better party now, 'cause the ride only goes so long*" sort of attitude.

Get what you can out of the deal, never mind the consequences.

Or just roll over and give up.

That's the **OR**.

It's my experience that more people in this town live the "**EITHER**" option.
But there's enough "**OR**" also going on - right here in Ottawa.

Either..... OR.....

Both of which happen when you get all caught up in living only with what's going on right now right around you.

Which, I sincerely hope, we don't get stuck in as Christians.
Part of why Jesus came is to keep us from getting stuck in that sort of rut.

We've spent Advent thinking about why Jesus Came.

He came, we remembered, as Saviour.

He came for each of us personally.

He came for us as a church family.

He came for the world.

And -

here's today's piece of the puzzle
he came **to make all things new**.

That's the Revelation 21 piece.

That's the piece that requires us to look forward.

To live in anticipation of what's coming down the road.

To live with the awareness that there's more to reality than what we experience with our five senses here and now.

And that it **won't** last forever!

So get ready for it.

There's a day coming when Creation as we know it, the laws of physics as we experience them, the limitations of time as we understand it -- when all that will pass away.

As will something else.....

Have a peek at verse one of Revelation 21.

What passes away along with the first heaven and the first earth?

.....that's right - **the sea**.

In the bible the sea is the symbol of evil.

And so, in Isaiah 57:20 the wicked are compared to the tossing **sea** which cannot rest, whose waters toss up mire and dirt.

And in Rev 13:1 we see a picture of the beast of evil, who blasphemes God and makes war against

God's people. Where does he come from?..... the **sea**.

No more sea means **no more evil**.

Another part to the "**NO MORE**" picture.

Drop from verse 1 to verse 4 for that part.

What do you read there?

No more tears.

No more death.

No more mourning or crying or pain.

That's life from the sea.

And it will be **completely gone!!**

And what else will be gone?

Drop down to verse 8:

There's a list of all sorts of damaging destructive stuff.

All that will be gone.

Because that is also life from the sea.

All that will be gathered up and sent

not to the Second Creation

but to something that will be, somehow, the Second Death.

Why?

Because the One in charge of the whole business says - verse 5:

"See I am making all things new..."

Fulfilling what is promised in Romans 8:21 -

"Creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay..."

A new heaven and new earth:

What is that?

It is creation remade, purified, completely overhauled.

It is creation free from the shackles of decay, pain, evil and death.

Forever.

Get ready.

It's coming.

Verse 6: The One who was there at the **very beginning**

will be there at the **very end** to ensure it -

And when that happens it will be the fulfillment of why Jesus came in the first place;
the fulfillment of Christmas.

History is moving in a linear fashion towards that great event.

There **IS** an end point coming.

That end point is the day that Revelation 21 envisions.

Are you ready if it were to come today?

Are you praying for it to come quickly?

Are you looking forward to experiencing it?

Or are you a bit afraid of it?

You don't need to be, you know - afraid of the Final Day.

The Bible says:

"If anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation....." [2 Cor 5]

In other words, if you have opened and surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, God looks at you **already now**
as part of His New Creation family.

You're in.
For sure.

If you haven't committed your life,
if you haven't said to Jesus,
 "*Here I am. Come live with me.*
 You take charge of me. I'm yours."
if you haven't done that
then I want to invite you to do that
 right
 now.

Pray with me - *in your heart, quietly pray -*
Jesus Christ, I acknowledge your power over creation.
I acknowledge your power over my life.

I know that I'm part of the problem of what's wrong with this world.
I want to become part of your divine solution.

I want to be a new creation.
I want to be yours.

Please live in me.
I welcome you today.
I surrender to you.

Do with me what you will.
 Whenever.
 Wherever.
 I am yours.
 Amen.

If you've overcome your spiritual hesitation, and prayed that prayer of surrender, and if you will take that prayer into your living this week,
then you are among those that the Bible calls **MORE THAN CONQUERORS**

Romans 8:37 - "*We are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

And to you then comes the promise of Revelation 21:7:
Those who conquer will inherit these things and I will be their God and they will be my children.

Does that give you confidence to face tomorrow?
It does to me!!
.....looking forward gives me confidence!

How far do we have to look forward?
I really don't know.
How long till Jesus returns?
Can't say.

I do know this - for some of us it may be closer than we think.
For even if he delays ushering in the fullness of the New Creation till past the end of 2010, there are some of us here who won't live to see the end of it.
That's a given.
The guys from Tubman's **will** walk down these aisles in 2010.
And if that's about us we will stand before the great heavenly throne earlier than the rest. We'll beat

'em home to glory.

So - be ready, and live **looking forward**.

And for the rest of us?

What if the Freightliner truck doesn't get you this year?

Well -- **still** live **looking forward**.

Don't give up on your fellow human beings.

And don't give up on caring for Creation.

Because the Alpha And Omega One doesn't give up on them, either.

Did it strike you that in this great passage it **doesn't** say that he is going to wipe out any vestige of the existing order?

That it will be all gone, and he'll start completely over?

It doesn't say that.

Instead, it uses the language of **renewal** and **re-creation**.

Here's the thing -

Just as the Paradise of Genesis 1 is connected to our present reality -

so too the New Creation will be connected.

There will be change.

But it will be connected.

God is not about to run this Creation through the shredder and put it out in next week's black box, so to speak.

He'll rescue it.

Because he made it in the first place.

He loves it.

He cares about it.

He's going to rescue it - rather than chuck it.

And so - why don't we

who live Looking Forward kind of lives

why don't we live with that same attitude?

Loving the creation and all creatures on it.

Caring about their well being.

Striving to

at least in some preliminary way

get rid of the tears and mourning and crying and pain

wherever God gives us opportunity to do so.

Living lives free of faithlessness, pollution, murder,

fornication, occult, idolatry and lying.

And praying for Him to come with all his power and finish the job that we begin in his name.

Yes - Look forward as you live, believer.

See what is to come.

And take heart.

Take heart in your working and serving for Jesus.

Because Jesus **will** complete what is all begun in His name.

AND

And take heart in the times when grief is suffered,

when hurt is experienced, and life runs off the rails.

Remember that you do not struggle here alone.

Remember that Jesus sees, understands,

is with you,
and works for you towards a day of renewal.

He who will one day heal all our hurts,
invites us to trust him in our grief today.

Jesus invites us --

- a. to walk and serve with courage and faith,
and
- b. to carry on with hope in the midst of our pain and incompleteness,

living **looking forward**

to that day when

ALL

will be

made

NEW!