

## Sermon followed by Service

May 29, 2022

Revelation 21:9-23

Rome. Egypt. Germany. Great Britain. The Colorado Wilderness. Colorado Fourteeners. Guidebooks for places I've been. Guidebooks for places I'd like to go. Guide books for places I'll never get to. I like this guidebook because it tells me how to get there. I like these guide books because they have pictures - magnificent, amazing, glorious, inspiring pictures.

This past week we've seen some pictures we wish we could un-see, haven't we? Pictures of death and destruction from Ukraine. Heart-breaking pictures of starving children, deformed children. Pictures of destruction from fire and tornadoes. Pictures that make us feel sick inside with the school shooting in Texas.

Today Jesus gives us a picture of a time and place, a life with no death or destruction, no hurt or heartache, no sickness in body or mind. A time and place, a life with no fear or worry, no gut-churning. A time and place where all the tears have already been wiped away and you will never-ever have another tear of pain or sadness.

Today Jesus gives us a picture of a time and place more magnificent, more glorious, more awesome, more inspiring than the most magnificent cathedral in Europe or the most awesome mountain-top view.

And this picture that Jesus gives us doesn't go on the pile of "shoulda, coulda, woulda when I was younger." It doesn't go on the pile of "out of our budget." It doesn't go on the pile of forgotten favorites from the past. No this picture that Jesus gives us is a time and a place, a life that Jesus has for us, for you - not "if you pay," but already "paid," because Jesus paid with his death on the cross. It's a time and a place, a life that Jesus has for us, for you - not "if you're good enough," or "because you're good enough," but because you have Jesus, because you have Jesus covering you with his goodness, so that God sees you not just as "good enough," but with Jesus and his life, God sees you as right by him and right for heaven. The picture that Jesus shows us today is of a time and place, a life that God has for you, and for all who believe in his gospel promise with Jesus. If you have any doubts about that being you, let's talk.

Today Jesus gives us a guidebook picture of heaven. And what's the first thing we see? The glory of God. Before we see any saints or angels, before we notice the pearly gates or the streets of gold, we see the glory of God. Our guidebook tells us: **"It shone with the glory of God; her source of light was like a very precious jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal."** Later we're told, **"The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp."** No sun, no moon, and yet the city sparkles with light. How? Why? The glory of the Lord – back with the Exodus when God delivered his people out of Egypt, the bright light in the pillar of fire that showed God's presence with his people; later, the light that filled the tabernacle and then the temple when God made his home there; the glory of God's holiness that would

blind and burn any sinner; the glory of God's Christmas love; then on the Mount of Transfiguration, light of the saving Lamb who shone brighter than lightning and whiter than snow. God's church in heaven shines bright with the glory of God. Why? Because it is the home of God.

What kind of home does God have? It's a home jeweled for kings and royalty. Now if this were some European cathedral or palace, the guide book might point us to some dark, cold monastery where the priests lived, or some row of shacks where the slaves and servants lived. But one of the most beautiful, impressive, and glorious things about the home of God, God's church in heaven, is that God's home is also the home of God's people. Those whose names are written in the book of life. Those who have been washed clean of their sin in the blood of the Lamb. Those who overcome the temptations of this world and remain faithful to the end. God's home in heaven is their home.

Picture some of the people living there. Poor Lazarus, who used to live off the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, his sores licked by dogs, he is now living in a city of gold and jewels; and it's his home! The martyr Stephen who was killed for his faith, and saw a vision of Jesus at the right hand of God before he died, now he lives with God. The thief who died on the cross next to Jesus, is now alive with Jesus in Paradise. People going through life in this world as lost - Jesus came to find them and take them home. People sick with sin - Jesus came to heal them and take them home. People used and abused - Jesus came to comfort them and take them home. The guilty - Jesus came to

forgive them and take them home. The lonely, the hurting, the unloved and unlovable, Jesus came to take them home, to make his home to be our home.

In that Holy City, the poor won't live in the wrong part of town, the hurting won't be forgotten and alone, the unlovable won't be shunned off to the side. That old order of things won't be in God's house. In that city of gold, the poor will no longer be poor. The hurting will have their tears wiped away, never to hurt again. And the lonely and unloved will be loved. By God himself, with God himself.

Did you notice? In heaven, the home of God, there is no house of God, no temple, no church. Why not? **“Because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.”** Because God is right there with his people, because Jesus the Lamb is right there face to face with his people. In God's City, God's people don't need a special place to go to see God or hear God or worship God. Instead of going to church and seeing a picture or a statue of Jesus, in the church of heaven, God's people see the Lord himself smiling, making his face shine on his us, right there in front of us. Instead of going to church and hearing a pastor, God's people hear the word of Jesus direct from his smile: “I love you; I've got you; and you've got me!” Can you imagine hearing his voice? ... seeing his smile? Some day we won't have to imagine, but we will see with our own eyes and hear with our own ears. Why? Because we will be living with God. In the church of heaven, God's home is also the home of God's people.

If we're going to finish our tour on time we better move along. We could talk about the walls - impressive in size, glorious with gems and jewels - showing off the glory of God, showing off the safety and security of his people. But let me jump ahead to say something about the gates - they're open with the riches of the world flowing in! In heaven, we won't be under siege. In heaven, we won't be suffering supply chain shortages. In heaven, we won't have to lock the doors at night. In heaven, with God, there will be no danger, no trouble, no evil - nothing to worry about, nothing to fear. In heaven, we will be perfectly safe in the light of Jesus.

Sounds good, doesn't it? I know I don't deserve to live in a house like that. I've caused too much hurt and heartache to be let into heaven. I've shamed God, fought God too much to be thought a child of God worthy of the home of God. That's not just me, is it? That's each and every one of us. And yet, I get to think of heaven as my home, and I get to show you heaven as your home. Why? In your baptism God put his name on you, washed you clean, covered you with Christ, made you alive as his child - a child of God fit for the home of God. To you, God gives his new covenant promise – **“I will be your God and you will be my people; I will forgive your sins and remember your wickedness no more.”** To you, Jesus says, **“Because I live you also will live.”** And to you, he gives his promise, **“I will come back and take you to be with me that you may be where I**

**am.”** As today’s tour comes to an end, you get to know this - that house, God’s house, is built for you. Amen.

May 28 & 29, 2022

## DIVINE SERVICE II

**IN OUR WORLD TODAY...** we are heading into the summer tour and travel season. Many of us are looking forward to touring - seeing places that are new to us, or places already favorite for us.

**IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ...** we observe Ascension Day recalling Christ's ascension from this world to the right hand of the Father in heaven, and Jesus gives us a sneak peak of a place better than any vacation tour - a tour of our future home in heaven.

### OPENING HYMN

*"Crown Him with Many Crowns"*

**Hymn 511**

Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon his throne;  
hark how the heav'nly anthem drowns all music but its own.  
Awake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,  
and hail him as thy matchless King thro' all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of love—behold his hands and side,  
rich wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified.  
No angel in the sky can fully bear that sight,  
but downward bends his wond'ring eye at mysteries so bright.

Crown him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave  
and rose victorious in the strife for those he came to save.  
His glories now we sing who died and rose on high,  
who died eternal life to bring and lives that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of heav'n, enthroned in worlds above;  
crown him the King to whom is giv'n the wondrous name of Love.  
Crown him with many crowns as thrones before him fall;  
crown him, ye kings, with many crowns for he is King of all.

## INVOCATION

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

## CONFESSION

M: Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

C: **Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.**

**For faithless worrying and selfish pride,**

**For sins of habit and sins of choice,**

**For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,**

**I deserve to be cast away from your presence forever.**

**O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.**

## ABSOLUTION

M: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

## LORD, HAVE MERCY (*Kyrie*)

M: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For the well-being of all people everywhere, that they may receive from you all they need to sustain body and life, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the spread of your life-giving gospel throughout the world, that all who are lost in sin may be brought to faith in you, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: **Christ, have mercy.**

M: For patience and perseverance in this life, that we may not lose the hope of heaven as we await your return, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: Lord of life, live in us that we may live for you.

C: **Amen.**

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, your Son our Savior was taken up in glory and intercedes for us at your right hand. Through your living and abiding Word, give us hearts to know him and faith to follow where he has gone; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### FIRST READING

*Acts 1:1–11*

In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky?”

This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM OF THE DAY

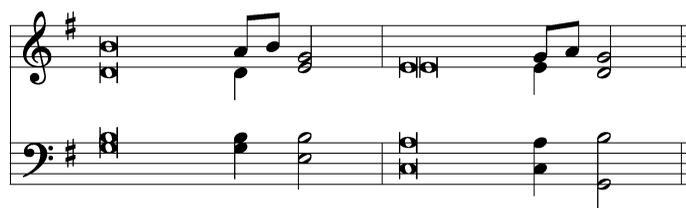
Psalm 47A

Refrain



God has gone up with a shout,  
the LORD with the sound of the trum - pet.

Tone



Clap your hands, all you / nations;  
shout to God with / cries of joy.  
For the LORD Most High is / awesome,  
the great King over / all the earth.  
God reigns over the / nations;  
God is seated on his / holy throne. *Refrain*

God has ascended amid / shouts of joy,  
the LORD amid the sounding of / trumpets.  
Sing praises to God, sing / praises;  
sing praises to our King, sing / praises.  
For God is the King of / all the earth;  
sing to him a / psalm of praise.

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son  
and to the Holy / Spirit,  
as it was in the be- / ginning,  
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. Refrain**

**SECOND READING**  
27

*Revelation 21:9–11, 22–*

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” 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. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN**

*“There Is a Higher Throne”*  
**Hymn 885**

There is a higher throne than all this world has known,  
where faithful ones from ev’ry tongue will one day come.  
Before the Son we’ll stand, made faultless through the Lamb;  
believing hearts find promised grace; salvation comes.

*Refrain*

Hear heaven's voices sing; their thund'rous anthem rings  
through em'rald courts and sapphire skies; their praises rise.  
All glory, wisdom, pow'r, strength, thanks, and honor are  
to God our King who reigns on high forevermore.

And there we'll find our home, our life before the throne;  
we'll honor him in perfect song where we belong.  
He'll wipe each tear-stained eye as thirst and hunger die;  
the Lamb becomes our Shepherd-King; we'll reign with him.

*Refrain*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*2 Timothy 1:10*

Alleluia. Christ Jesus has destroyed death and has brought life and  
immortality to light through the gospel. Alleluia.

**GOSPEL**

*Luke 24:44–53*

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you:  
Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses,  
the Prophets and the Psalms."

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He  
told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from  
the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be  
preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are  
witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has  
promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from  
on high."

When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his  
hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was  
taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem  
with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

*"Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise"*

**Hymn 474**

Hail the day that sees him rise to his throne above the skies!  
Christ, the Lamb for sinners giv'n, reascends his native heav'n.

There the glorious triumph waits; lift your heads, eternal gates!  
He has conquered death and sin; take the King of glory in!

See, the heav'n its Lord receives, yet he loves the earth he leaves;  
though returning to his throne, still he calls the world his own.

See, he lifts his hands above; see, he shows the prints of love.  
Hark! His gracious lips bestow blessings on his Church below.

Still for us he intercedes, his atoning death he pleads.  
He, the first of all our race, near himself prepares a place.

There we shall with him remain, partners in his endless reign,  
there his face unclouded see, live with him eternally.

**SERMON**

**NICENE CREED**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at**

the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

#### PRAYER AND 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

#### THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Individually packaged wafers are gluten-free.)

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up unto the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: **It is good and right so to do.**

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who rose from the dead in glorious triumph to bring forgiveness to the world and everlasting life to all who believe.

Therefore with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your

holy name and join their glorious song:

**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *Sanctus***

O holy, holy, holy  
Lord God of pow'r and might,  
Your glory, earth and heaven  
In countless ways recite.  
Hosanna! Come and save us,  
Lord God of hosts on high,  
And in your grace and mercy  
Receive our fervent cry.

Hosanna in the highest!  
How truly blest is he  
Who in God's name is coming  
To set his people free!  
He comes to bring salvation  
And with his blood outpoured,  
Deliver us from bondage—  
Hosanna, mighty Lord!

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**M:** Blessed are you, O Lord of heaven and earth. We praise and thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, and we remember the great acts of love through which he has ransomed us from sin, death, and the devil's power.

By his incarnation, he became one with us.  
By his perfect life, he fulfilled your holy will.  
By his innocent death, he overcame hell.  
By his rising from the grave, he opened heaven.

Invited by your grace and instructed by your Word, we approach your table with repentant and joyful hearts. Strengthen us through Christ's body and blood, and preserve us in the true faith until we feast with him and all his ransomed people in glory everlasting.

**C: Amen.**

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**M:** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured

out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

LAMB OF GOD *Agnus Dei*

Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the  
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,  
you take a - way the sin of the world;  
grant us your peace. A - men.

**DISTRIBUTION HYMN**

*“On Christ’s Ascension I Now Build”*

**Hymn 476**

On Christ’s ascension I now build the hope of my ascension.  
This hope alone has always stilled all doubt and apprehension,  
for where the head is, there as well I know his members are to dwell  
when Christ shall come and call them.

Since Christ returned to claim his throne, great gifts for me obtaining,  
my heart will rest in him alone, no other rest remaining,  
for where my treasure went before, there all my thoughts will ever soar  
to still their deepest yearning.

O grant, dear Lord, this grace to me, recalling your ascension,  
that I may serve you faithfully, in thanks for my redemption;  
and then, when all my days will cease, let me depart in joy and peace  
in answer to my pleading.

**CLOSING PRAYER**

M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**BLESSING**

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. Amen.

## CLOSING HYMN

### *“A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing”* Hymn 472 v. 1, 5, & 6

A hymn of glory let us sing! New songs throughout the world shall ring:  
Alleluia, alleluia!

Christ, by a road before untrod, ascends unto the throne of God.  
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Be now our joy on earth, O Lord, and be our future great reward.  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Then, throned with you forever, we shall praise your name eternally.  
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

O risen Christ, ascended Lord, all praise to you let earth accord.  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
You are, while endless ages run, with Father and with Spirit one.  
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

## OFFERING

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