

Seven Words to Life  
*New Creation*  
 Revelation 21:1-8 & Isaiah 9:6-7

Revelation 21:1-8 - *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. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> 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."<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>4</sup> 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."<sup>5</sup> 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."<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. <sup>8</sup> 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."*

When Jesus gave his discourse on the bread of life the Bible teaches

*After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.<sup>67</sup> So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" <sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,<sup>69</sup> and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:66-69)*

Life, according to Peter's confession, is knowing and believing that Jesus is God.

When we walk with Jesus in the Gospels, we also come to know this. Whereas –

*...because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man [Adam], much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:17)*

If relational disfunction is the first evidence of sin – Adam and Eve died because they were disconnected from God, then relational health is the first sign of reconciliation; we live because we are connected to Jesus

To know God and to love him is life. To know God and walk with him is abundant life.

**First: The Way It Was - Innocence**

The original creation mandate to Adam and Eve was to “be fruitful, fill the earth and subdue it” (Gen 1:28). We know that Adam and Eve failed, as did Israel.

Genesis 1:27 - *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male*

and female he created them<sup>28</sup> And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it...”

How did God bless Adam and Eve?

- 1 – Of everything he created, he created them in his image
- 2 – Of all creation, he gave them a creation mandate to represent him

God’s blessing is derived from his image and faithfulness to that reflection.

That’s why this series is titled ‘*Seven Words to Life.*’ By understanding the Bible story and our place in it, we find life as God intends it to be.

Creation  
Fall  
Israel  
Incarnation  
Redemption  
New Creation

This is God’s story. It is the Bible story. It is our story. We didn’t invent life. We discover it when God graciously invites us to be a part of what he is doing in the world.

The way it was supposed to be is that the world was supposed to be covered with the knowledge of God and as a result, blessed in life.

### **Second: The Way It is – Fallen (but not without hope)**

Both Adam, Eve and Israel failed. Just as Adam, Eve, and Israel were supposed to but failed, and just as Jesus did, the church is called to image God in the work of fruitfulness as defined by

- 1 – Fill the earth
- 2 – Subdue it

As we walked through Genesis, we saw the devastation sin wreaked on the earth. By the time we get to Gen 5, everyone is dying. But when Jesus came, he brought life and life as God intended it in Eden and as it will be in the New Jerusalem.

At Heritage, our vision is *to make disciples here and around the world.*

We intend to do this by inviting everyone in our sphere of influence into four Christ-conforming environments -

- Corporate Gathering
- Community Groups
- Service to the Body
- Outreach to the World

This is how we fill the earth with the knowledge of God and see it subdued to Christ. This is our task for 2019; to see all the people who attend Heritage invest in all four of these commitments

This will provide balance for you – upward, inward and outward.  
It will also provide direction for you – Are you invested in all four opportunities?

**IMP:** You are a microcosm of what God is doing cosmically

Titus 3:5 - *he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit*

Matthew 19:28 - *Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

‘Regeneration’ and ‘new world’ = *paligenesia* = It occurs only in Titus 3:5 & Matt 19:28

*Palin = again*  
*Genesis = birth*

Your new birth is a reflection of what God is doing in all creation. You are the little story of God’s big story.

You may say, “*Oh no, my life is not in Shalom*” or “*The world around me doesn’t reflect that ongoing salvation*” but remember –

*The night is chilly, but not dark.  
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,  
It covers but not hides the sky.  
The moon is behind, and at the full;  
And yet she looks both small and dull.  
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:  
'Tis a month before the month of May,  
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.*  
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Romans 8:19 - *For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God....22-23 - For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.<sup>23</sup> And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*

I love what God has done. The sign and assurance of our new birth and of the world’s new birth is evidenced every Spring. God put the reminder and hope of a new creation in the cycle of the seasons.

You may be concerned that if your life is supposed to provide evidence of a new creation, that the evidence is lacking but, as we’ll see in a minute in our text verse, our hope is not in us to do God’s work but in God.

*...we have this treasure in jars of clay, [for the express purpose] to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us (2 Cor 4:7).*

Hope not in you. Hope not in your children. Hope not in your education or intellect or skill, etc. Employ these things in the work of God in you but don’t hope in them. Hope in God. The Psalmist repeatedly reminded himself of misplaced and right-placed hope –

Psalm 42:11 - *Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you **in** turmoil within me? Hope in God*

Psalm 62:5 - *For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.*

Psalm 78:5-7 - *He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children,<sup>6</sup> that the next generation might know them: the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children<sup>7</sup> so that they*

*know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God*

This is Paul's prayer for us –

Romans 15:13 - *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*

When the worst thing that can happen to you, happens to you, you will sorrow. It is only natural to do so. But we are reminded to

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 - *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. <sup>15</sup> For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage one another with these words.*

Be concerned with the truth of it,  
not the timing of it

First: The Way It was - Innocent

Second: The Way It Is - Fallen

**Third: The Way It Will Be - Perfect**

One day, Christ will return to fulfil that original creation mandate. God has not forgotten. He is reconciling all things to himself and will do so. Here's how the OT prophets saw it

Habakkuk 2:14 - *For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*

Isaiah 11:9 - *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*

*He comes to make his blessings flow*

*Far as the curse is found...*

- Joy to the World by Isaac Watts

God created Israel to be this light to the nations; not an exclusive people but an inclusive ingathering of all the people of the earth

Genesis 12:3 - *in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed*

And we see hints of this throughout the OT. When we read through Judges, we saw Rahab and the entire tribe of the Gibeonites pledge allegiance to Israel's God.

Hosea 2:21 - *And in that day I will answer, declares the LORD... I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, 'You are my people'; and he shall say, 'You are my God.'*

Zechariah 2:10-11 - *Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the LORD. <sup>11</sup> And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people.*

By the time Matthew records Jesus's lineage, he's included four scandalous, Gentile women, Tamar, Ruth, Rahab and Bathsheba to demonstrate his global redemptive plan

And here is the best news. What God commanded, He will accomplish. Think about all that we read in Rev 21:1-8. How will this happen?

Isaiah 9:6-7 - *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*<sup>7</sup> *Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*

GOSPEL: Even if you are a nonChristian, you long for this perfection, but look for remedies other than Jesus.

(An unbeliever might argue against this but it's true. Every unbeliever longs for perfection in relationships, at the job, for a single day to last forever....

*Our destiny, our being's heart and home,  
Is with infinitude, and only there;  
With hope it is, hope that can never die,  
Effort, and expectation, and desire,  
And something evermore about to be.*  
- William Wordsworth in The Prelude, Book VI

From where does this longing emanate? If this is all there is, why would we long for something else/more? And what is the basis for that ideal? From where does our idea of 'perfect' originate? In fact, the longing comes from God (Ecc 3:11) and the idea of perfection comes from the echo of Eden in our hearts.)

### **Conclusion:**

All of this raises two questions –

- 1 – NonChristian - Do you realize that only Jesus can satisfy the longing inside of you?
- 2 – Christian - What can 'the zeal of the Lord of hosts' do for you? For your world?

### **Community Groups:**

CG Leaders, please remember these questions are only conversation starters. You know your CG and may create your own thoughts to best involve your CG in discussion.

- 1 – Recite the seven words to life.
- 2 – How does living in God's story give us purpose, meaning and fulfilment?
- 3 – God's blessing is derived from living in faithfulness to God's image. How did Adam and Eve miss that blessing? How do we? Provide specific examples about the world. About yourself.
- 4 – The Pastor spoke about 4 Heritage environments for making disciples:
  - Corporate Gathering – How are you involved? – Are you singing, giving, fellowshiping, ministering, inviting people to visit Heritage?
  - Community Groups – How are you involved? Are you sharing in the conversation, praying for the group, inviting others, etc.

- praying for the group, inviting others, etc.
- Service to the Body – In what ministry are you serving? What are the opportunities?
- Outreach to the World – To whom where are you sharing and demonstrating the gospel in the world

**CG Leaders:** Let's plan on each CG taking part in two outreaches this year. These are ministry opportunities to Johnson City/Washington County, outside of the normal church times or church events like the July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration, etc). This is something your CG will do; one in the first 6 months of the year and another in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the year. This is a good time to start that discussion with your CG. This isn't a "we have to" but "we get to" opportunity that will provide joy and purpose to your CG. When you decide, if you're a CCG let Pastor Reggie know; if you're an HCG, let Pastor Charlie know.

Here are some "Service to the Body" opportunities for your CG members –

- 9:15 Greeters (arriving at the church at 8:55). E-mail [reggie@hbcjc.org](mailto:reggie@hbcjc.org)
- Music – Singing, musicians, audio and video. E-mail [charlie@hbcjc.org](mailto:charlie@hbcjc.org)
- Youth – Children's Church helpers, E-mail [joel@hbcjc.org](mailto:joel@hbcjc.org)
- Children – Pre-school and elementary CG teachers, pre-school worship helpers, nursery workers. E-mail [angela@hbcjc.org](mailto:angela@hbcjc.org)
- We would like to open our community garden again this year. E-mail [joel@hbcjc.org](mailto:joel@hbcjc.org)

5 – Talk about the word '*paligenesia*' in Titus 3:5 & Matt 19:28. How does this demonstrate the old saying, "The world will never be more than we are" or "The world is just a reflection of us?" How can God change the world by changing us?

6 – Read 2 Cor 4:7. How can we use our failures to preach the gospel to our families, friends, etc?

7 – Look at the Psalms about hope that the Pastor quoted. Discuss how we often place our hope in other things than God. How does this only increase our feeling of failure and depression?

8 – How can being more concerned about the truth of eschatology, rather than its timing, unite us in our mission to make disciples here and around the world?

9 – What fallen aspect of your world are you depending on 'the zeal of the Lord' to accomplish in your life?

10 – How has God "placed eternity in the hearts" of people and how can you use that longing to share the gospel?