

SERMON FOR MAY 15, 2022

TEXT: REVELATION 21: 1-7

THEME: LIVING FOREVER

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. **2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. **4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." **5** And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." **6** And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. **7** The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

In the name of Jesus:

The Fountain of Youth is a mythical spring that allegedly is supposed to restore the youth of anyone who drinks or bathes in its waters. Tales of the mythical fountain span the ages and cultures, with each people and generation seeking a way to live longer.

People have always attempted to live forever. The Renaissance philosopher Montaigne said that "death has us by the scruff of the neck at

every moment.” That is akin to what David writes in Psalm 23, “even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death...” People have sought to escape death’s chokehold forever.

In our modern times, people have sought immortality. In 2013, Google launched Calico, a biotech firm that has the objective to solve death. Peter Thiel, the co-founder of PayPal, has pledged to fight death. And billionaire Jeff Bezos, the chairman of Amazon, last year invested in Altos Labs, a company that plans to “rejuvenate” cells in order to reverse disease.

There is even a start up company that is developing drugs so that dogs can live longer. Clinical trials are scheduled to begin this year. If they have success, the plan is to apply the same science to people. Immortality, or anti-aging, as researchers call it, is the next big thing. Experts in the field peg that by 2025 that anti-aging industry will be worth over \$610 billion dollars. From the Silicon Valley to Cambridge England, scientists are presently writing the latest chapter in the quest for humans to live forever. In Cambridge, scientists seek a mathematical solution to the problem. In the Silicon Valley, others are turning to biotechnology in an attempt to recode or reprogram cells of the human body, much like one might try to program a computer. The thinking is, if cures can be found for diseases such as Alzheimer’s, then

perhaps human cells can be reset to live forever. But even scientists are optimistic about conquering death. They are advising against booking a vacation for the summer of 4500.

So how can someone live forever? The Bible says that death isn't a mathematical or scientific problem to be solved. In fact, no human being has the ability to defeat death. The reason is that death is a spiritual problem that has affected the entire human race, both physically and spiritually. You know the Bible passages well, That, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God. The wages of sin is death.

Scripture speaks the truth. Death, from a human perspective, is undefeated. Everyone you know either has died or will die. I have run across a few people in my ministry that don't want to go into the hospital for fear of not coming out alive. It isn't the hospital that kills, its sin and death. Funeral homes still are doing well, why? Because death is an ever present reality. And that is why the anti-aging industry is looking to spend in excess of \$600 billion by 2025, because no human being can defeat death. Death remains undefeated.

But in all of this, there is hope. Our God is a loving God and does not abandon us to death. His will is that all be saved from sin and death. That is why the Voice from heaven declares: "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. **4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

God in love has sent His Son Jesus into the world to be the One who would defeat death. This is why Jesus was born of a virgin, so that He would be the God-Man, God's only Son in human flesh. Throughout His life Jesus remained sinless. Yes, He was tempted as we are yet He never sinned. Jesus, who did not sin, became your substitute in His life and in His death, dying on the cross to forgive you and each and every sinner, then rising again on the Third Day to defeat sin, Satan and death for you and forever. Death could not hold Him in the grave. Jesus burst the bonds of death, so death no longer has a death grip on those who believe in Him. For in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. Just as Jesus died and rose again physically from the grave, so too you will die an earthly death. At your death, the Lord will take your soul to be with Him in Paradise.

Then, on the Last Day, when Jesus comes again Christ will raise up in the physical body all those who have died in the faith. You will live forever, in the flesh, just as Job declared: “I know that my Redeemer lives “And after my skin has been thus destroyed,yet in my flesh I shall see God, **27** whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.”

What will that look like? John tells us “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. **2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **4** He (God) 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.”**5** And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. **7** The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”

This new life as described in our text for today is better than anything you could ever imagine. The new heaven and earth is beyond our comprehension. There we will live forever, all of our problems will be solved, the sickness you suffered will be cured, the crosses that you have carried will

all be made right. There will be no more pain, no more suffering, no more tears. However you have been wronged in life will be made right, made right, not because of revenge or retaliation or retribution. It will all be made right because this will be the perfect place, where sin, imperfection, suffering and death have been defeated and eliminated because of Jesus. The old has passed away, He will make all things new.

For the first time in your life things will be how they should be. The waters will not be polluted, the land will flourish. It will be what God intended in the Garden of Eden.

This is the life Jesus has promised to His people, given to you as a free gift, through faith in Him. The worst day in heaven will be infinitely better than the best day here on earth, for we will be alive forever, with Jesus. It is the life we are all looking forward to. And in Jesus' words, it is done. It is money in the bank. You will live forever in the flesh, all because of Jesus.

Amen