

“I’m Covered” – Pr Jim Sprengle – All Saints’ Day November 3, 2024

- I. **Revelation 7:13-14** – ¹³Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” ¹⁴I 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.”
- II. **In his book, “Living Expectantly”**, author Benjamin Reaves tells a story –
 - a. He was just a little guy, and his mom had died before he could even crawl.
 - i. His dad, trying to be both mother and father, had planned a picnic.
 - ii. The little boy had never been on a picnic, so they made plans to go to a great spot by the river, fixed the lunch, and packed the car.
 - iii. Then it was time to go to bed, so they could get up bright and early for the day ahead.
 - b. However, the boy just couldn’t sleep... he just tossed and turned... the excitement got to him.
 - i. So, he got out of bed, tiptoed into the living room where his dad had fallen asleep in his easy chair... and tapped him on the shoulder.
 - ii. When dad woke up, he asked, “What’s wrong? What are you doing up?”
 1. He whispered, “I can’t sleep.”
 2. The father asked, “Why can’t you sleep?”
 3. “Daddy, I’m just really excited about tomorrow.”
 4. So dad tells him, “Well, it makes sense that you are excited, tomorrow is going to be great. But it won’t be great if we don’t get any sleep. So jump back in bed and get a good night’s rest.”
 - iii. So, the boy tiptoed back to bed.... But before long, the little guy came back to his snoring father.
 1. He tapped on his shoulder again... and his dad opened his eyes... almost blurting out harsh words, but he held back... “What’s the matter now?”
 2. The boy said, “Daddy, I just want to thank you for tomorrow.”¹
 - c. When I think of how God rescues the hopeless... pursues the broken and hurting... saves the least of these in a world that takes pride in power and control... and brings us home to a loving Father in heaven... I thank Him with all my heart.
 - i. When I think about God’s divine plan that includes all His children, and that He still plans to bring us to our eternal home one day... all I can say is Father, I want to thank you for tomorrow!
- III. **John’s Revelation is a vision of the present... and the future.**
 - a. The disciple whom Jesus loved (John 21:7) was able to see the most amazing things about the current tribulations we face, while also seeing the

end of the world and the coming of the Righteous One, Jesus Christ on the Last Day.

- b. John writes about all kinds of trials and tribulations that come at us from the sin that causes so much turmoil and heartache.
- c. The Book of Revelation has been the source of much debate among believers and those who want to understand the meaning of this vision.
 - i. Three points help us understand Revelation better:
 - 1. John uses *symbolic* language and numbers, which point to God's perfect timing and His plan of salvation.
 - 2. It is not only a book about the *future*, but it helps us see the nature of the trials and tribulations we face in the *present*.
 - 3. Finally, it is about Jesus our Savior and our comfort in knowing that if God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)
- d. So, in the section leading up to our vision of heaven today, we read about all kinds of trials and tribulations that we see around us all the time:
 - i. Tyranny over the human race (bad government);
 - ii. Bloodshed, war, and murder;
 - iii. Famine and starvation;
 - iv. Death and the grave;
 - v. Persecution for believing in Jesus...
 - vi. And possibly someday soon, the end of the world.
- e. Other than the last one, these trials are taking place around us all the time.
 - i. Just watch the news today and you will see dictators and tyranny... wars all over the world... starving and needy people... death... and persecution for faith in Christ.
 - ii. Without a doubt – we have experienced these things around us, and they are sure to get worse, not better.
 - iii. Just because we live in the land of plenty... a country of opportunity and freedom... does not mean we escape disasters, tragedies, or adversity.
- f. Here is the key to getting through this trouble – through faith in Christ.
 - i. Trouble will come, but we know that the Lord is our Shepherd, who guides us through the valley of the shadow of death and ultimately, we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23)
 - ii. Therefore, no matter what kind of trouble we face, we can always trust in God fully... we can look to Him and say, "I don't understand it all, but Lord through faith I trust in You to deliver me."

IV. **Our Jesus is the expert at delivering us from death to life.**

- a. In a grace-filled, one-time event... most of us were baptized.
 - i. With all authority – Jesus commanded that we make disciples of all nations by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them... (Matthew 28:18-19)

- ii. So, when you came to the baptismal font, whether as a baby, a child, a teenager, or adult... God's command was fulfilled to bring you into the kingdom.
- iii. It was the awesome gift of baptism and coming to faith in God and all His promises that washed away your sin, and made you into a new person with a white robe of righteousness that covers you even now.
- b. Remember that Jesus went first – as Paul says in Romans 6, we were baptized into Christ's death, and are connected to His work of taking away our sins by the cross... but we are also connected to His resurrection, or the victory over sin, death, and the devil!
- c. Jesus went to the cross to pay the heavy debt which sin brought to the whole world – and that sin causes all kinds of trial and tribulation.
- d. Yet, Jesus also rose from the grave, which was His victory – the triumph over sin, and death, and satan.
- e. The greatest mystery to me is that by grace through faith, God saw fit to take that victory and give it to me... I'm the victor through Him!
 - i. That is the mystery for all of us – we receive Christ's righteousness and the victory because we have faith and were baptized in Him.
 - ii. As Galatians 3:27 says, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

V. **At this very moment, there is a massive group celebrating this victory.**

- a. It's not just us in our current, earthly home, but all those who went before us and are now in glory.
- b. The victory in Jesus was fulfilled in the lives of those who are praising and worshiping God in their heavenly home... as they wear white robes.
 - i. The glory of the Lord shines all around them, and they are in complete awe and astonishment over the beauty of it all.
 - ii. The saints are singing out with the largest choir that could possibly be assembled... and every person feels nothing but pure joy... the presence of God Himself.
 - iii. They wave their palm branches as sign of victory and deliverance over the tribulations they faced in their earthly journey – but also the peace and wellbeing of their current state.
 - iv. When our loved ones die in the faith, we can be supremely confident in the saving grace of our Lord to bring them into His presence.
 - v. Just imagine it... the great crowd, the palm leaves waving, the singing, the joy, and the white robes that are bleached in the blood of Jesus.
 - 1. When I think about it, it makes me say, "Dear Father in heaven, thank you for tomorrow..." because I know it will be wonderful.
- c. We have such a wonderful gift through faith in Jesus – our present life is covered by His rich grace and mercy, while our future is covered by the

promise of eternal life with all those who have gone before us in the very presence of God.

- i. In fact, God's righteousness and forgiveness was draped over me from the moment I believed... and I boldly proclaim... "I'm covered!"
- ii. Say that with me on three, 1,2,3, "I'm covered!" Amen.

¹ Source: Benjamin Reaves, "Living Expectantly," *Preaching Today*, Tape No. 65