

Grounded in Grace

Pictures of Hope and Redemption Pt 8

Picture #7- Future Pictures: The Redemption of the Soul

By Steve Benson



² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’” ⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶ 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 water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Revelation 21:2-7

As we close this series, we look at the last future picture of “Ground Zero.” As we speak, the tower on the far left side is almost complete and the hollowed ground of 9/11 is being renewed. In much the same way, God is redeeming and renewing this whole world through his son Jesus Christ. Let’s take a look at a future picture of God’s redemption of our souls that is happening now.

1. God invites us to experience the wedding feast of intimacy! 21:2-3

After Krista and I got engaged, I had a literal count down in my heart as I waited for our wedding day. I anticipated, looked, and crossed off each day until that wonderful day in July came to fruition. The Lord uses this picture of a wedding feast to give us a heavenly taste of one of our beautiful earthly realities. In this picture, we see the beautiful assurance that the Lord is waiting for us to come down the aisle and join him in complete intimacy, complete union, and perfect love. The most incredible thing is that God invites us to experience this union now. We are invited to walk with the Lord now. We are invited to dance with the Lord now. We are invited to experience the Lord now.

The gospel begins with the incredible truth that “Jesus is Immanuel –God is with us” (Matthew). And then it ends with the reality that the Lord God will be with his people. The rest of the journey is the overflow of experiencing the how, when, where, and what of Jesus dwelling with us. We discover these truths as we journey with him. We uncover the Lord’s proclamation that he identifies us as his children and longs to be with us.

2. God invites us to experience his tear-wiping hand! 21:4

Our tears have always been precious to God. Is it any wonder that at the end of history the Lord calls attention to our tears and pain? Our Lord not only wipes our tears but the Lord also validates our wounds. Many times in our lives, our wounds are either minimized or never acknowledged as painful. We often hear, “get over it.” However, the Lord never minimizes our wounds but redeems our wounds. The Lord never denies our pain but embraces us in our pain. In this beautiful verse, the Lord invites us to experience his tear-wiping hand. He invites us to bring our wounds, pain, and tears to him.

Over the last few months, both Krista and I have experienced the tear wiping hand of God. It has not been easy, but the Lord has calmly held our hands, whispering his presence even in the midst of wandering through fertility treatments. In our honesty, God has met us. In our wandering, God has wandered with us. In our wondering, God has given us peace in the midst of questions. May the Lord give you his tear-wiping hand as you wander with him.

3. God invites us to experience his redemption 21:5-7

The Lord promises to make all things new. And even now, he is redeeming, and will continue to redeem, our stories. All of heaven and earth groan for the day of redemption. Our hearts groan to see the struggles cease, to experience life without disease, and to walk without emotional or physical pain. There is a certainty in his redemption and it will come to be one day - this is true! However, this is also our reality now. Jesus calls us to come and drink from the well of living water without cost. Jesus calls us to experience redemption in our stories now.

As we journey toward this end, he calls us to experience his eternal redemption in this temporary world. When we grapple with truths of the gospel, he is redeeming our minds. When we begin to see the past through lenses of the present, we have a glimpse of his redemption. When our souls wander and wonder, we experience his redemption through the power of honesty and openness. For in these times, we groan and grapple with a world that is not yet redeemed but is on the journey toward complete redemption