

## 8. The Glory of Everlasting grace

*PRTS Confernece 2022*

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**Bible Text:** Revelation 22:1-5  
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And I ask you to turn now in your Bibles to Revelation 22 and we will read verses 1 through 5, and I like what we just did and that is to read it standing. So please rise for the reading of God's word, Revelation 22:1-5.

1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: 4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. 5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Thus far God's word.

Let us pray.

*Lord, in this last address we ask thee that thou wouldst open the windows of heaven that we might see this vision and printed upon thy word, that we would see it for ourselves, that the weight of glory would rest upon us and that thou wouldst kindle in our hearts for a first time or in a fresh way in a real and deep and abiding way that we would take with us the glory that abides for thy children all because of Christ. And that grace, yea, everlasting grace, would be our theme as we go from this place in worship, in witness, and in walk. And we ask this all in Jesus' name and for his glory. Amen.*

You may be seated.

Dear friends, as we end this conference, I want to speak to you about something that will never end, thanks be to God. In his first epistle, Peter instructs us, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." That means that there is not just grace in the past or grace

in the present, but there is grace to be brought unto us at the end. Truly everything for you, dear Christian, is grace. It's all of grace and there are many chapters in the scriptures, and we've heard definitely some of them that speak of this future grace. The prophets of old, they saw it and they penned it, seeing it from afar. But when we think of this future grace in this moment I can't think of a more wonderful, glorious and comforting passage than the one before us today, Revelation 22:1-5, in which, as it were, the whole of the scriptures reach a climax.

It's important to remember that this book of Revelation was written by John on the isle of Patmos where he was in isolation, and it was written to Christians of all times and places who were to suffer trials, tribulations, temptations and persecutions, and in order for them to bear up under them Christ from heaven gives his church this inheritance of a vision beforehand of what will happen on the earth, but also what is reserved for his people in heaven and in the new heavens and the new earth. And as one commentator says, obedience to the lamb and living according to God's righteous requirements will result in suffering during this present age but it will result in glory in the age to come, and the final vision of Revelation promises the overcomers a reward that far outweighs their earthly suffering. This vision that we have here before us, he goes on to say, is intended to comfort and motivate believers to persevere through temptations that we would not compromise, and that is my desire here this morning as well as we close this conference as many things await us, and we know not what they will be, certainly not all of them, that it is this vision, this truth, this glory that, by God's grace, would enable us to withstand all the fiery darts, all the persecution, all the tribulation from within and from without.

And so our theme looking to the Lord just now is the glory of everlasting grace. We have two simple thoughts. First, there is an abundance of life in God for Christ's sake. And secondly, there is unbroken communion with God for Christ's sake reserved for the people of God. The glory of everlasting grace and abundance of life in God for Christ's sake, that's verses 1 and 2 of Revelation 22, and then unbroken communion with God for Christ's sake, verses 3 through 5, and we'll just go through that. You may want to keep your Bibles open.

Well, these first five verses of Revelation 22 connect with the previous chapter which has given us a vision of the New Jerusalem of God, the city of God, its walls, its gates, the street, and so on, that place where God will dwell with his people forever in New Jerusalem. And these verses at the beginning of 22, they connect because John here is given to focus in on the very center of that city where he finds wonderful, serene and glorious things. A tree. Water. A throne. And radiant light. But these verses of Revelation 22 don't just connect to the previous chapter, they connect to all the chapters of scripture, and not least to the first chapters of scripture. It's as if scripture forms now this wonderful whole where the things that you can read of in the first chapters, they reappear and if they were glorious then they're all the more glorious now. The tree of life, you remember, Genesis 2 held before us there and the rivers and other things that echo here in this section. Alexander Maclaren, one of the great commentators and preachers, he says these opening verses of Revelation 22 are like the finale of some great concerto in which the

themes that have sounded throughout it are all gathered up in the last majestic melodious crash.

And so, first, we have this river. It is called a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the lamb. The symbol of river, rivers reoccurs in many passages in the scripture, in the Psalms and in the prophets, most notably Ezekiel 47 which pictures a river that comes forth from the throne of God. It comes out of the sovereign purposes of God, of the glory of God and his throne. And that river in Ezekiel 47 symbolized the blessings of life that come forth from God to undeserving sinners like you and like me. John sees this river once again and it is so pure, translucent, clear as crystal, meaning that it is free of any impurity. Matthew Henry says all streams of earthly comfort are muddy but these are clear and refreshing. This water is delicious, attractive, satisfying, and it's a great and wide river whose expanse reaches to the nations. This water, dear friend, my dear believing friend, is the same water you tasted when first you came to Jesus and drank in obedience to his command from that life-giving stream when he said to you, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." And you took that parched soul of yours, and you dove into that water, and you drank and you were satisfied. And that's what the believer's life is again and again on this side of eternity, but on the other side, that thirst will be forever slacked. As John 4:14 was read earlier this morning, how true this is, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him," Christ says, "shall never thirst. The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Andrew Gray, the godly preacher who died at such a young age, he speaks of this river and he explains it this way, "Yes, the pure river of the water of life clear as crystal is just the unfeigned and unceasing lovingkindness of the Father. The pure river of the water of life clear as crystal is just the constant grace, the infinite fullness, and the unsearchable riches of the Son. The pure river of the water of life clear as crystal is just the invigorating influence, the wonderful teachings, the unspeakable solace of the Holy Spirit." The river of life, dear friends, is the grace of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that flows from the throne of God and that reaches you and that satisfies you and is everything to you. It lies in God. It lies in the tri-unity of his persons. And it is glorious. It is refreshing. It is abundant.

Jonathan Rankin Anderson, godly preacher, ee wrote this, "A pure river beautifies, fertilizes, refreshes any country. Oh, does this river beautify, fertilize, and refresh your soul? What lovely churches would fill this land if every church had this river flowing through it. There's hope for a sinner here. There's hope nowhere else. There is hope for a kingdom here. There is hope nowhere else. There is hope for a poor, miserable world here. There is hope nowhere else." I ask you, have you drunk from that river which is Christ and God in Christ for sinners? Are you drinking from that today? Are you putting your parched and weary soul into that water and drinking till you want no more?

In addition to the symbol of a river, John goes on and speaks of this tree of life. There were two trees in the in the original garden, one of the trees was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil from which Adam and Eve were not allowed to eat. We don't

hear of that tree now but we hear of the tree of life. And here it is. It's glorious, isn't it, that there is even this tree of life mentioned at the end of the scriptures? And it tells us, doesn't it, that the Lord has reopened the way to the tree of life. There are here no angels to guard the entrance of it like there are in Genesis 3. No, this tree of life stands accessible, available, open, and it is a redemptive tree for the healing of the nations. And if the river was a picture of Christ, then this tree is also a picture of Christ, the glorious tree as he's called in the Song of Solomon, the apple tree, that fruit-bearing tree of whom the Lord said about himself there, "If a man shall eat of me, he shall live forever."

It's as if the Lord here through John wants us to know that this river, as glorious as it is, it's not enough to picture all that is in Christ. Yes, a river will quench your thirst, but this tree has everything that you need for your soul to feed on him. And notice how this tree is pictured. It's in the middle of a street, and literally it's better translated here as a marketplace, as an open square, if you will, wide open square like many of the ancient cities have and many cities still have today, especially in in the Middle East. An open square where anyone could come. Open to the public, we would say. Room for anyone. The whole city can come. Others can come. It's unrestricted. There's no entrance fee. It's not hidden behind walls. There are no gates keeping one out. There is openness with this tree. No angels, as I said, guarding the entrance to it. It's accessible for the nations. It shall be for the healing of the nations.

And now there's something about this tree that when you look at this more clearly, you wonder what does this mean because it says that on either side of the river there is this tree, and some commentators have taken this to be that this is kind of a tree-lined river, that you have a line of trees on this side and you have a line of trees on the other side. They take tree here as a collective. And that that's possible but I think it's different and indeed, this presses the limits of our imagination but that's what Revelation is doing. That's what needs to happen because our imaginations cannot contain this. It is greater than what we can think about. It passes understanding. But I think we need to take these things exactly as they are. Here's this tree and its roots and its stump is so large it expands on either side of this river, and the river literally flows through the tree and out of the tree.

The word here, as Lenski, the commentator remarks, is actually not the typical word for tree, but it's wood. Wood, and this term wood if you would search it throughout the scriptures, it is most often applied to the wood of the tree on which Christ was crucified, and so the picture is evocative, isn't it? Here's this tree and its branches are far-reaching wide, and there's fruits everywhere and there's leaves for the healing of the nations, as we'll see, but out of this tree there is this river that indeed starts with the throne of God but it flows through this tree and out of this tree, and it's as if this tree envelops it and embraces it, and all the fruitfulness, all the refreshingness, all the glory of the river is anchored here and proceeding out of this wood, out of this tree.

Remember that the one who is writing this here, John the Apostle, is the one who stood there by the Cross of Christ and he saw with his own eyes, and he reports it in John 19 that forthwith out of the side of Christ came blood and water. Blood and water. He saw

that, and here his very mind is given to see this picture of this river, expansive as it is, and this tree. What a glorious picture this is. When we think of how the Lord Jesus Christ was nailed to a tree and he bore the curse due to our sins, and he died on the accursed wood, but he died there as the Son of God in our nature. And he says in the gospel of John 14:9, he says, "Because I live, because I live, you shall live also." The picture is this: Christ hung, took the curse, died the death that you, dear believer, deserved to die and because of him a river of water of life pure as crystal opens up, conveying to you even now through the gospel salvation into your souls, into your lives, watering, refreshing, feeding, cleansing you. It's all because of the cross.

In verse 3 we read there shall be no more curse there and the reason is because he took the curse. He was made to be a curse in order that this river of blessing would flow to you, dear believer. What blessings there are. They bear 12 manner of fruits and yielded her fruit every month. One thing the Lord teaches us when he uncovers us to our sin and our unrighteousness is that we don't bear fruit. Do you bear fruit of yourself, I mean, of yourself by nature? No. The Bible makes clear it's corrupt fruit that comes forth from us, rotten fruit. But not so from Christ. With respect to his Father and respect to his people, there is only good fruit all the day, "I do always those things that please my Father." He lived a life of active obedience as well as his passive obedience and there lies the secret of all our hope and all our expectation. In him was every fruit imaginable. My fruit is there for the plucking, for the eating, for the satisfying of sinners like you and like me even today.

Notice how it's stated there, yields, manner of fruit every month. All manner of fruit every month and what that means is that this isn't just an apple tree where you can go at certain times of the year, like very soon in this area at least in the month of September the apples will ripen and, children, you'll go to these apple orchards and you can be able to pick these apples. But it's one month of the year and one fruit. But in Christ is everything, all manner of fruit, all the time. You don't need to wait. It's there today. It will be there tomorrow as long as you need it already now in the gospel. And that means, my unconverted friend, that you can come to Christ anytime. This is for the healing of the nations. Here you are, you're here at this conference. You're sick. You're weary. You're heavy laden. Whatever has brought you here, in the providence of God you're here in Christ and the gospel has been held out to you and you may come. It's free. It's available. In the gospel, there's no angels guarding the path. Christ holds out his hands, his reach is far, and on the basis of his finished work, he calls, he cries, "Come into me and eat and you'll never hunger again."

But not only is there fruit for eating, but there are leaves for healing. Typically, we don't think of the leaves of trees as being of much value, do we? We like the looks of it, especially in the fall, and Michigan is beautiful in the fall, people come from far and near to view the leaves here, but these leaves, congregation, they have medicinal qualities. They're there for the healing of the nations, and it tells us that Christ not only provides satisfaction, but he also works healing. This is truly a therapeutic tree and all because he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace were upon him. He bore our diseases. He carried our sorrows in order that now in the gospel already here the branch

has reached to where you are just now. They reach out among the nations. Notice that in the gospel, the nations for the healing of the nations. Should not the nations hear about this tree? And should not in the gospel, in the witness of God's people, should these leaves not reach far and wide to the bruised, battered, broken hearts of sinners the world over?

Are you looking to Christ for healing? He healed many during his days on the earth but still today he healeth all our diseases. He redeemeth our life from destruction. But I wonder, do you apply those leaves to yourself? Do you know what that's like to come with all the brokenness of your soul and body and life, beaten, bruised by sin, by the world, by your three-headed enemy, and to come to this tree, to come to Christ and find leaves exactly suited for your healing to take, and the touch of those leaves is effectual to heal your sin-sick soul?

Ralph Erskine in a sermon on this passage, he talks about these leaves as God's promises, and the doctrines of the scripture to which we must go and with all our need we are to take them and to apply them to ourselves, to take them for the medicine is ours in Christ. Beautiful picture in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" where Christian has just engaged in battle with Apollyon and it looks at one point that Apollyon will win. There he is gloating over Christian, but Christian grabs his sword and cries out, "Rejoice not against me, O my enemy. When I fall, I shall arise." And with one final thrust of the sword, he gains the victory over Apollyon, but wounded from the fight, Christian lies there wondering what will heal his wounds, and then Bunyan writes so beautifully, "A hand appears with leaves from the tree of life, the which Christian took and applied to the wounds he had received in the battle and was healed immediately." He sent his word and healed them. Do you do this? Do you know this? Do you know this life? In the midst of all your sickness and sin and all that it brings to you, to reach for this Christ in the gospel, to take his promises and all the doctrines associated with him, and to apply them to yourselves through the Spirit and find healing entering into your soul?

Well, congregation, this is the first part of the vision that John is given to see, and what boundless, what glorious life comes forth from Christ for sinners, for the nations, for you and for me. And that can be tasted here. Though John has a vision of the future here and there it will be perfect, and these things will be there, dear believer, you will not meet a stranger there, but you will meet him whom you've begun to know and love here, but there in fullness. There without avail, without any shadow, you will have him. But already now in the gospel you may have that it reaches into time the salvation that then will be completed reaches into your experience now.

There's this quaint story of William Gatsby, a Baptist preacher who went to see Robert Hawker, whose book "The Poor Man's Morning and Evening" was just recommended to you yesterday and indeed, how Christ-centered it is. And Gatsby had his own thoughts of Hawker and he went and visited him and he had been told that Hawker was good in many ways, but he didn't delve enough into the experiences of God's people. But he went to visit him when he was near death on his deathbed, and someone later on spoke to Gatsby and said, "Did you see Hawker?" And Gatsby said, "I only saw his feet and his legs. The

rest of him was already in glory." And he said he had such intimacy with Christ already in this life that he wished for even a small part of it. Dear believer, you can have that and you do have that, but do you exercise it? Do you live out of it?

The conference is like this, but at other times as well the Lord can at times for his people, he can pull away the veil. It's never so much and it's so real, it's so glorious. I remember visiting a man who would often come to these conferences vur now he's in glory, he has his heart's desire. In the last year of his life, I'd visit him regularly and he would say this every time, he'd say, "Jerry, Christ is so real." He says, "He's right here. He's real. He's real." By day and by night he would commune with his Christ, and he was pleased even though he couldn't leave his home, he exalted his Christ and his words echo to you today, "Christ is real. His healing is real. The water of life is real." Have you tasted? Do you know this? This is it.

But now we've already really reached into our second and main and major point, and that is that not only is there an everlasting grace, this wonderful, bountiful life to be had in God through Christ, but this, my dear believing friend, this is what you will have on the other side, unbroken communion with God for Christ's sake. We have in principle communion with God through Christ and grafted into him and union with him now. First moment that a believer embraces Christ, the true and living faith, he has Christ living in him. He's in Christ and Christ is in him, and the Father comes and communes with him. But all by faith. All by faith.

But John now is given in these climactic verses, verses 3 through 5, to picture what believers will have unbroken and there are seven things here. John loves sevens. There are seven things very briefly here, the one after the other that picture for us this unbroken communion that you, dear believer, will have with your God on the other side without a shadow, without a veil.

There shall be no more curse. Thanks be to God, no more curse. The curse had entered in into paradise at the first. The curse had separated us then from God. That was the essence of the curse. We had turned from God and the curse was that we could no longer come back to God and commune with God, our Creator and our fountain of life, our fountain of living waters. That was the curse, but John, as he looks around on this scene of the river of water of life freely, the crystal-clear river and the tree of life, as he looks around, he peers, as it were, this is how I think of it humanly, is there anything that reminds me of the curse? Is this going to be like the first paradise? Is there a slithering snake around who will somehow ruin this bliss of the second paradise? And he says it, and he exalts in it, "There is no more curse. There shall be no more curse."

Andrew Gray in his sermon, he says sin brings the curse, but here there will be no more curse, and so there will be no more sin. There will be only holiness without a stain to mar it. Or James Durham, he says there is no effective sin nor wrath here in this beatific paradise at last. No cursed thing. No cursed person, for all are fully happy. Whatever followed sin is shut out of thee, O paradise.

Honesty behooves me to speak just a moment to you who are not in Christ because while here there will be no curse in this glorious new heavens and new earth, those who die without Christ, my friend, do you hear me? One of the last things you'll hear of the mouth of the Savior, he who came in his word as the Savior, one of the last things you will hear is, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." Oh, to have those words be the last words you hear from the one whose arms are outstretched still, who's everything, who is everything for a sinner like you. O my friend, exchange your sin for his righteousness, as we've heard today. Fall at his feet. Kiss the Son, this Son, lest he be angry in that day, and be inducted by faith today into the glorious realm of union with Christ in order that that day you will look and though you have deserved the curse, though you've deserved to be in that place of curse, instead of curse you'll have endless communion with the Son of God and God in him forevermore with no curse. No curse. There shall be no curse but only communion.

Secondly, John sees here not only no curse but he sees that the throne is there. When I seek to enter into those words and when I hear him say this, there shall be no more curse but the throne of God and of the Lamb is there, the throne is there. In life, dear believer, you've come to love the throne. By nature you hated it. You hated the throne of God. You yourself wanted to be on the throne. That's how it is for each and every one of us by nature but God in his melting mercy, he made the throne so attractive to you, the throne of God and of the Lamb. You love the throne of the one who came to this earth and made the cross his throne and did not despise the banner over top of it that said, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." And there he hung on his throne, a curse in order that the throne of God and of the Lamb might be there where you are.

You know, in life we often seek and search for that throne, in prayer, the throne of grace, a place where we can obtain mercy and help in time of need. Maybe some of you lately have been looking for that throne. You can't catch a glimpse of that throne. Things seem to be all in an upheaval. As we just heard, all around decay I see. But the throne, and that's why in Revelation 4 he saw a throne through a window opened up in heaven. How believers love the throne and him that sits upon it sovereignly serenely governing everything, and the Lamb with him in the throne. One throne, Father, Son, and Spirit. The Lamb on the throne. That's a throne I need. That's a throne you need. The throne is there. The throne is there. Glory Hallelujah.

But then, thirdly, we have a remarkable thing, we have his servants serve him. The idea here in the original is of priestly service pictured in the Old Testament by the shadowy service of the priests in the Old Testament, many of whom sang praise unto God, and glorified God meticulously as the Lord had ordained it. When you, dear believer, have been made a willing servant of the Lord in life, you're able to say, "I am thy servant bound yet free." And for you, dear believer, if you're a believer here today, one day in the courts of the Lord is better than a thousand elsewhere. You'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of your God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. One day, one day is better but here it's not one day, it's always, forever serving God.



When I think of how imperfect my service is here below, that we seek and we love to serve the Lord, yet with many falterings many failings, many flaws, his servants shall serve him all out of Christ, and that perfectly. You know, in this life the Lord says to humble us, he says in Luke 17:10 when you have done all that you've commanded to do, and who does that? Then you're unprofitable servants. On this side that's the best. We can be unprofitable servants, but there his servants shall serve him eternally, gloriously, without stain, without flaw, without sin and communion in his service.

No curse. The throne is there. His servants shall serve him. But here in the middle, the 4th of the 7th we read, "they shall see his face." They shall see his face. In the Old Testament, the Lord reminded his people often, "You cannot see my face and live." What that means, that is, in our unglorified state, still in this world, the face of God would be too much for us. Indeed, during his days on the earth Christ, in the state of his humiliation Incarnate, was seen but without faith no beauty that we should desire him. Many turned away from him. Many in fact, viewed him with disdain and with disgust. We hid, as it were, our faces from him. So marred was he more than any man. But when he was transfigured before the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, on that one single time they saw him with a glory that no full or no cleanser here on earth could give anything, and his face shone as the sun. Try looking into the glorious sun, the noonday. And that was on the earth. John the apostle, this John who writes this, who was privileged to be in the bosom of his Master in the days of his flesh, in Revelation 1, when he turns and sees the exalted Lord Jesus Christ, he fell down to the ground as dead. But here, here, dear believer, you'll be given the eyes and the capacity to see him as he is and you will have your heart's desire. Now through a glass darkly but then face-to-face. When I in righteousness at last thy glorious face shall see, when all the weary night is passed, and I awake with thee, then, then I shall be satisfied.

Oh, to live in the single pursuit of that day, to see him, to see my Savior as he is. This was the prayer of David in Psalm 27 when he says, "My heart's desire, the one request I've made is to see the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in this temple." And that's by faith here. But, David, you now already in the intermediate state, you have your reward. You have it in full. And dear believers in the new heaven and the new earth, you'll see the face of the one who saw you when you were yet in your sin when you would not see him, and when you turned away from him. But his eyes are like dove's eyes. They're glorious. They're beautiful. If eyes are the windows of the soul, as we commonly say, what will we see in our Redeemer's eyes at the last? Boundless love from all eternity. Redeeming love.

It will take an eternity, truly, to take that in, to see my Savior as he is. There's no beauty like that. That's the definition of beauty, of glory. Communion face-to-face, not afar off. Notice too that every eye shall see him. It says here they shall see his face. Sometimes the idea is here in heaven, and this is just our imperfect mind that we bring to this, we need to be biblical, but sometimes we think, "You know, even if I could just be behind all these people and they could tell me that they see him, that would be enough." But my friend, they shall see him. Every eye shall see him. Every believer on that day shall see him. They shall see him as he is.

Oh, aren't the best moments of your life here by faith to see him? Isn't that your desire? As you come here to this place to see him, did you catch a glimpse of him here? This arms us against temptation, doesn't it, to think that these eyes of ours will one day be remade where we'll awake and like Job says, "With my eyes I shall see my Redeemer." But shouldn't that motivate us to turn away from vanity? This Dr. Hawker I mentioned earlier, he was once asked if he was going to see this great sight that had come to town, and he said, "What are all the earthly sights to me? Mine eyes have seen the King in his beauty in the land that is afar off. What care I about earthly sights? My eyes and all that belong to me are heavenward, they are Christ-ward."

You will see him, dear believer. You'll see him and you will be made like unto him as we see in our fifth aspect here, "his name shall be in their foreheads." His name shall be in their foreheads. This is a scriptural way of thinking. We heard about the priests in Dr. Barrett's address, the Day of Atonement and the priest was given this holy miter, the high priest, at least, and on the forehead of the priest on this miter, this thing that covered their head, there would be "Holiness to the Lord" as a sign that this high priest in his office was dedicated to the Lord, he belonged to the Lord, he reflected this holiness that the Lord alone has, but he reflected it upon this earthly mediator, this type. But dear believer, at the last you won't have a miter with "Holiness to the Lord," but your very forehead will have the name of your God written upon it as a reflection, as a claim upon you that you are his and that forever, and that your forehead and the Bible makes much of the light of the countenance which shines. So the countenance of a friend makes a friend to rejoice, Proverbs says, but that will reflect the glory of the Lord. It will proclaim the name of the Lord, the glory of the Lord. His name will be in your forehead.

And there's one more thing with this, when the Levite's were called upon to bless the children of Israel, they would lift up their hands and they would pronounce this Aaronic blessing you can read of in Numbers 6. "The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace." And then number 6 says, "and so you shall put the name of the Lord upon the sons of Israel," through this blessing, through this triune blessing, which is really what it is. The Lord, the Lord, the Lord. And the Lord would cause his light, his face, to shine upon them and what would that do? It would put the name of God upon the sons of Israel. But here, in perfection, this name will be written. It will be inscribed indelibly forevermore, never to be altered, never to be changed. Isn't this communion where God sees his own name in each of his people and it's all to the glory of God where everything cries out not only holiness to the Lord but glory to the Lord, great things he has done. It's all the Lord. It's the Triune God from beginning to end.

Is it any wonder, then, that the sixth thing is light, and this is said three different ways but it's really the same point. But words here are graphic, aren't they? It's as if John uses language to push the limits, and he says, "there shall be no night there and they need no candle, neither light of the sun for the Lord God giveth them light." Light. Light. Light. Constant, uninterrupted light. Here on earth, we have our nights, we have our evenings, we have our midnights, we have our darkness, we have our seasons in which it seems

scarcely a light reaches us, and the clouds return after the rain, in our own experience. James Durham says about this day, this eternity, no intermission in that happy day. No change. No ups. No downs. You won't need a candle. You won't need any artificial light. You won't even need the sun because he is light. God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. Oh, communion with him in whom there's no shadow of turning, and no darkness at all. Light, light, light forevermore. Unbroken communion.

And then seventhly and lastly and mercifully, "and they will reign forever." Near the beginning John saw that his people will serve him but now he tells us that these servants, God's servants, they're kings, they're queens, they're reigning. They are reigning servants. And of course what this means is that here below you do battle. On the other side of these doors there waits the battle all from out of Christ to do battle against our foes. But dear believer, you will reign. You will do nothing but reign on the other side. One commentator says that, "I shall reign over myself. I shall be thorough master of myself. No unruly desires. No undisciplined affections. I shall not be what an earthly king often is, his own base slave, no war between the flesh and the spirit, no rebellion of the will, no struggle of corrupt inclinations but with all that true royalty of God, I will be king, I will reign all through God. I will serve God without wavering, and I will find his service to be sovereignty. I will find his service to be sovereignty all through Christ."

Seven things. Seven things that bespeak unbroken communion. Well, dear friends, we must close and I have two applications and the one is connected to the word "grace" and the other is connected to the word "everlasting." The first is this as we close this address and as we close this conference, I ask you: do you know the grace of God? Have you tasted, even ever so slightly, that the Lord is gracious? If so be that you have tasted, Peter says, that the Lord is gracious, do you know what that is? Have you had even one taste that he is gracious? Don't live, my friend, for the muddy waters of the world, for the rotten fruit of the trees of your own righteousness, for anything here which is fading. Live for Christ. Live out of this river of life already now, this tree of life. Live out of Christ in the gospel, and you will and you must forever taste grace, a grace that will last forever.

But then this word "everlasting." We've heard it a lot. May we take it with us. This grace of Christ is never temporary. As we heard this morning, the Lord will not be defeated and his grace will triumph till the very end. If you don't know grace, that word "everlasting" should haunt you because then yours will be everlasting guilt. Think about that, my friend. Think about that just for five minutes, nothing else but this "everlasting guilt. When today in the gospel held out as near as your mouth and as near as your heart, the word is nigh unto thee, God's grace in the gospel for sinners is here. You can taste it now, when you take your empty soul, your ruined life and your broken righteousness and you plunge in that water and you say, "I must have this Christ. I must have this grace. All of grace." My friend, one taste of that and that grace in your life will last forever.

I close with a wonderful story that Chris reached to me yesterday from Septimus Sears, who spoke of his father, and this is what he writes and with this I close. "On one occasion when hindered from meeting with us on a Lord's Day morning, being in bed with a cold," this is Septimus Sears's father. He said he had hours of sweet meditation upon the word

everlasting. He seemed to be as full of joy as he could hold. He said, "I am loved with an everlasting love. My name is written in an everlasting book of life. I'm interested in an everlasting covenant and given into the hands of an everlasting surety, I have an everlasting righteousness, an everlasting atonement, an everlasting Savior, an everlasting intercessor, an everlasting friend, and an everlasting prophet, an everlasting priest, an everlasting king, an everlasting rock to build upon, everlasting bread to eat, an everlasting home where I shall wear an everlasting crown, have an everlasting harp of gold, and sing the everlasting song of everlasting grace." Amen. Glory to God. Amen.

*Gracious, glorious, radiant, splendid, beautiful, precious, redeeming God in Christ, save the lost, strengthen thy people, burrow thy truth deep within our souls, already now write thy name upon our foreheads that we would belong to thee, that we would serve thee, that we would fight through thee, and one day reign with thee forever, and to see thee not through a veil darkly, with no shadows, with no nights, not even through our tears for they'll be wiped away, but we'll see thee as thou art, and be made like unto thee, all of grace. Lord, may we leave this place with the worthiness of the Lamb on our lips and in our heart, and may the world know that that Lamb still reigns and will reign and will reign forever. All glory to him. We ask this in the pardon of every sin, all to the glory of God. Amen.*