



Free Evangelical  
Lutheran Synod  
in South Africa

## Sermon for New Year's Day 2018

### *The Spring of the Water of Life!*



St. John's Lutheran Parish  
Shelly Beach

#### • **The Word of God for this Sermon is written in Revelations 21, 1-8:**

- <sup>ESV</sup> <sup>1</sup> 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>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 any-more, 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 sulphur, which is the second death."
- **Let us pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, open our ears, enlighten our minds and give us from this Water of Life. Amen.*
- **Dear Beloved of the Lord!**
- The watchword for this year of the LORD 2018 is taken from the book of Revelations. Its a beautiful word, filled with the Gospel to the brim, for the thirsty. Not thirsty in the sense of physical thirst, that thirst which maybe some tried to quench with too much beer, wine and champagne, last night- this is a thirst for the Water of Life.

• Let us unpack what this Water stands for. First we hear, its given by the I am who is Alpha and Omega, by God. That includes all persons of the Trinity. God the Father and God the Son are explicitly identified with the I am in the book of Revelations. God is Alpha and Omega, that is the Beginning and the End, that proclaims His eternal nature. Both Beginning and End are dependent on God alone!

• He, God, is the One, who will give to the thirsty from the spring of the Water of Life without payment. We know that God is referring to Jesus' payment. This Water of Life is for free, because the Lamb has paid for it. He is the fountain of this Water of Life. Eternal Life flows forth from His Death and Resurrection. In Baptism our old Adam was crucified and died with Christ, so that we will live with Him. That is where we were connected with the Water of Life.

• That is where we were united with the source of eternal Life. This brings forth trust in Christ. He gave us His Love and His Life, although we did not deserve it. And now verse 7 says, whœver conquers will have this heritage of eternal Life with God. Whœver conquers refers to trust in Christ. Trust in Christ unites us with Christ. So, whatever belongs to Christ belongs to those who rely on His gift of Grace. Therefore, on the Last Day, God will give to those who conquered by abiding in Christ the Life coming forth from the fountain Christ.

• That is, Christ is the fountain of fulfilment of LIFE, of pure LIFE, without the interference of death! The pictures and symbolic language of this Revelation reveal to us, that things will in some sense be traceable to our life now. In some sense our life now is a mirror of things to come. However, our existence now is so marred by sin and death and a drought of the spirit of God, such a warped image of God, that it will at the same time be completely different.

• The fulfilment will be so abundant, across the whole spectrum of God's Creation, that it will be completely new for us. Let us consider some things, there will be no death any more, no fear of death, no need to fear any other person at all! No murderers, no liars, no people with hidden agendas trying to deceive you. And we will never lie too, not even a white lie here and there. It will be truth and trust and love and respect against everyone all the time. This

alone goes far above what we can imagine!

• And above all, God will dwell amongst us and we will see Him. That is, there will be no doubt whatsoever. We will be with Him and He with us. It will be a city, Jerusalem from above, not made by human hands, but the whole city will be the temple of God, the place where He is present with His Grace.

• Everything of the first Creation will in some sense find its fulfilment in terms of its original created essence in the New Creation. Water is important for life here on earth. We in South Africa know this. So, water in the new Jerusalem stands for everything that keeps our eternal life going and nurtures it. It will flow from the throne of God!

• This means, we will drink from this water. Even in the New Jerusalem we will depend on the gifts of God. We will not be independent from God, having our eternal life all in ourselves. That would turn us into God. No. We will remain human beings. We will always remain fully dependent on God and His life-giving gifts. So, we see, it will be like in the first paradise, that we will continue to receive God's gifts continuously. But this will not be an issue. We will not be weary to come to church to receive the good gifts of God. We will be living in church, in the Body of Christ and His gifts will be available in abundance. Our old Adam will not be around to interfere and rebel against our complete dependency of God. That fight, we still have to fight here on earth, will be over for good.

• So, in a sense going to church three times in a row, is like a little practice run which will probably reveal to us, that we need that Water of Life desperately.

• In Baptism God has started this new relationship, this new covenant with us, making available His gifts to us. Those who are thirsty, those who realise that they need the Spirit of God to desire the things He wants to give to us, this Water is available here in the Body of Christ. We need the new Spirit of God to see through the things of this world. The Spirit of God working through this Word of Revelation makes our life here and now transparent, so that we can see behind these things, so that we can see where it is actually going. The Spirit of God reveals to us what is going on in the Divine Service. We hear the audible

Word spoken by the weak servant as coming from God Himself. That is why we rise when God speaks to us.

• And we sing the hymns, God's Word we have received through the readings and in the sermon, back to Him. That's why it makes sense that it is not just any hymn. We praise Him by receiving His Word and singing it back to Him. We sing hymns for Him. And so we can go through everything of the Divine Service. As the light of eternity shines on these seemingly ordinary things, we begin to see them in a new light. One day in the New Jerusalem, we will realise to the full what God taught us through His Word. Then the full glory and beauty of it all will be fully revealed to us.

• And so, as we enter a New Year, which is a time to reflect on what is important for our life, let us remember this verse as we go into this year. Wherever we use water or see water, let us remember this verse, which will remind us of the Water of Life which God makes available in the Body of Christ, reaching down from heaven, in a preliminary way, so that we will conquer, so that we will abide in Christ. The more we drink of it, the more we make use of the gifts God gives His children, the more our attitude and desires will become focused on being with Him, and this will change our perceptions towards the people around us. As we grow deeper into dependence of Christ, our neighbours will benefit from it, our vocation will be done in a new light.

• God's gifts are not only good for us, they are vital for our new being in Christ! Therefore, come, you who are thirsty for true LIFE, drink from the spring of the water of Life without payment. **Amen.**

*Now the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus, our Lord. **Amen.** (<sup>ESV</sup> Eph 3,20-21)*