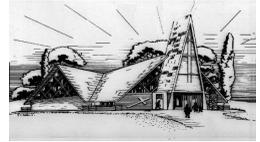




Free Evangelical Lutheran
Synod in South Africa

Sermon- Sunday Cantate

**“To the thirsty I will give from the
spring of water of life without
payment!”**



St. John's Lutheran Parish Shelly Beach

The Word of God for this Sermon is written in Rev 21,1-8:

- **ESV Revelation 21:1** 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 any-more, 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.
- **8** 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, and our minds so that we will see what Christ has prepared for us and what God gives to us out of His fatherly goodness without worthiness on our side through the work of His first Creation! Amen.*

Dear Beloved of God in Christ!

- What a beautiful vision of your inheritance, dear congregation! A new heaven and a new earth, your new home prepared for you by your bridegroom Christ! A holy city, the new Jerusalem! The final dwelling place of God with man. God in the midst of His people, His Church! Fully united are man and God, humans with one another.
- A special unity, not for the sake of unity, but a unity standing on the One who is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. A unity based on the written words which are trustworthy and true! What a strange concept for so many people in our days, that written words can actually be true! Behold, the written word is not separated from the living Word, Christ Himself. No. No. No. The written Word is

just as true as Christ Himself. You cannot drive a wedge between the written Word and Christ. If you have the written Word of Christ in its full understanding you have Christ Himself. You cannot separate the person of Christ from His baptismal Ministry or from His Word which He had written down for us through His Apostles, with the help of the Holy Spirit. Here we have a good example of this. We receive insight in this truth!

- On the other hand, this vision does reveal a separation, a mega separation, a final separation! The new heaven and the new earth are separated from the first heaven and the first earth. That is the earth we see and live in with our earthly body and senses. This earth, the stars, the sun and the moon will pass away! Therefore the Bible tells us to not make ourselves too comfortable here! This is not your true inheritance! If you have inherited something or if you will inherit something remember that all of this will pass away. It does not last! Don't cling or even fight over things that will be gone in two-hundred years from now. You cannot take it with you. The new is separated from the first!

- Yes, this is a deep truth, Jesus brings separation. Jesus separates truth from untruth, faith from disbelief, clean from unclean, holy from unholy. He came to ultimately, in the end, execute the final separation of evil and good! Jesus is not the One who stands for everything goes, or that everything is relative. That is how He is portrayed, unfortunately, by many people and church-leaders of our day. But, that is not the Jesus of the Holy Scriptures!

- The Jesus of the Holy Scriptures is the bridegroom of the bride. On the Last Day when the first earth and the first heaven will pass away, that is when the bride, the fulfilled and glorified Church will meet the glorious Bridegroom. The bride will be fully holy and prepared, by God, for this magnificent day!

- In contrast to this verse 8 gives a list of all those who will not attend, who will be excluded, who will be separated from the marriage feast of the Lamb! They also receive a portion, their inheritance, basically what they wanted, what they desired, namely to be separated from God instead of from sin! *"But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable (corrupt), 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."*

- This is just as certain, just as much revelation as verses 1-7. These people, described by those nouns, will not be part of the new heaven and the new earth. That is for sure! For the simple reason that if the new earth would allow these into its midst it would quickly turn into a similar world we experience now, another fight between good and evil.

• On the Last Day this fight will be over, at last, for ever. So, whoever still rebels against God's Will cannot and will not be allowed in. They will receive their portion, described as the lake of fire, eternal death, eternal separation from the Grace of God! That is what they wanted. That is what they will get! This serves as a strong warning to all of us!

• This is a most disturbing verse for all of us, and it should be! Why? Because if we are honest with ourselves, are we not doing some of those terrible sins? Can we say that we never lie, for example? Can we say that we never shy away from giving witness of the truth? This list basically describes sins against the Ten Commandments. And we know that we don't always manage to keep them.

• And right here we have to speak about probably the greatest danger of our age. It has become modern or post-modern practise to trim down the commandments of God to almost non-existing. If idolaters are told that their way is just another way to God, or even to Christ, then they will not thirst for the forgiveness of their grave sins in God's eyes. Then they will remain idolaters! If sexual immorality, of any kind is not condemned as sin, people who are stuck in it will not desire to come free of it. They will not long to be free from it, and thus they will remain sexually immoral! This is where many churches who bought into the spirit of our times, to be politically correct, are doing their members no favour by being lenient with their peoples' wrong desires- they are leading their people to the second death instead of to the waters of Life from Christ!

• It is always better to be honest and to speak the truth in love. So, if we look at ourselves, if we look at what is going on in our lives, compared to the mirror of God's Ten Commandments, we see ourselves belonging more to those who deserve the second death.

• That is where we would have ended up if Christ had not called out, *"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."* To the thirsty I will give, says Jesus. Oh what golden words. Do you hear that? The fountain of eternal Life! The only hope we have to be included, to participate of the magnificent heritage of God's new creation! Those who lack something and know it and long for it will receive what Christ promised as they go to Jesus. If one is thirsty one desires water above all else. If you desire to be cleansed of all those sins named in verse 8 so that you will participate of the new Jerusalem, then you will long for the forgiveness Jesus hands out through His servants in His Body. You will long to be freed, to be separated from the evil in your heart!

• Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega of our salvation! He has fulfilled the Will of

God, all righteousness for us and now He hands out water from the fountain of Life, freely. He has begun our Salvation and He will bring it to its fulfilled completion, to a wonderful end, a feast in eternity.

- We don't deserve to be in His Body, but because we are united with Him, we also conquer sin. The cycle of sin is broken as we receive His water of Life for free!
- Please note that those who belong to the new Body of Christ take care that they don't simply carry on sinning with their bodies of the first creation. They desire to comply with the Will of God. They don't say, as many say these days, 'don't worry, those are first creation requirements! You belong to the new creation. What you do with your old bodies does not matter any more.'
- People of the new Creation also come into the right relationship with the first creation! We thank God for what He gave us, what a great gift it is to us. We begin to understand God's Will, God's Wisdom and Love and Grace even in the gifts of the first creation. We begin to treasure what He made and we long to find out more about the purpose of it all. We don't simply scrap the first and say, it doesn't matter any more that there are different genders, and that God wants us to commit to one another first, then marry and then only have families! We begin to realise that the first creation is not the problem, but our feelings, desires and selfish needs.
- Those are the ones God needed to renew in us. Therefore, as He renews them in us through His Word we come to love the Ten Commandments, although they crucify our old Self. We begin to agree with God's orders of the first creation against our own obsession to always fight for our own rights! Therefore we begin to live a Life of repentance, always willing to be corrected, always willing to ask for forgiveness and to give forgiveness so that the deadly cycles of sin are broken.
- The water Christ hands out is effective, because it flows from His sacrifice. Hear it, take it in, your sins are forgiven, through His wounds you have been healed!
Amen.
- *"The Grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all." Amen. [John 22,21]*