

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on June 4, 2017**

"The Future of an Inclusive Church (Revelation 22:1-21) Part 3"

[In today's sermon, "The Future of an Inclusive Church (Revelation 22:1-21) Part 3", Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows the church is now and will continue to be a community of redemption for all who want to participate.]

Notes

Introduction:

- Pastor Craig offered up a prayer for Angie and Sadie's family who recently experienced a tragic car accident with the death of Sadie's brother while they were in the Philippines for a family reunion.
- So today wraps up our 3 part series which began on Mother's Day, titled "A Mother's Honor" which alluded to what Paul had to say in Galatians where he allegorized Sarah as representing the "mother of all" and "Jerusalem from above".
- And that lead into last week's message – "The Bride's and Nation's Honor (Revelation 21:1-27), which represents the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven and what that means.
- So today's message will show an inclusive church that exists on into the future.
- The Holy City, which is New Jerusalem is called the Bride, which represents the church (Rev. 21:2)
- The city of New Jerusalem coming from heaven to the earth is 1,500 miles x 1,500 miles or 2,250,000 square miles. (Rev. 21:16)
- Research shows that New York City, which has 8.5 million people, is 302 square miles in size – 28,000 people per square mile.
- Now Los Angeles has roughly 4 million people on 469 square miles – 8500 people per square mile.
- The United nations project the earth's population by 2083 to be 10 billion.
- So, 10 billion people into 2,250,000 square miles comes out to around 4500 people per square mile, which is about half of what we experience in the US.
- This means that the New Jerusalem in the future is large enough and inclusive enough to include every man, woman and child that has ever lived.
- Now if were to be a small group of people that will make it to heaven, say 144,000, would we need a city of that size?
- So, the beauty of what we will see today is that God's city is not only tremendous in size, but also tremendous in architecture as well as in jewels and gold, etc.

- Last week, we saw that the 3 gates on each of the 4 sides of the New Jerusalem city are never closed – they were always open.
- In the first century, a walled city had for its security its high walls with only 2 gates that were usually closed and guarded except to let in people or material goods.
- We know that security of New Jerusalem comes from, by inference, participation – those who have their robes washed and being part of the family of God – the church of God.
- 3 gates x 4 walls = 12, which is a special number signifying community (Rev. 21:25)
- So the church, today, represents community just as the church in the future will.
- The new security comes through participation.
- And yet at the same time, we'll see that there's room for the not-yet-believers or those not-yet participating.
- So as we experience Ascension Sunday or Pentecost, we need to review the three unions and what it signifies for our salvation.

The three unions:

- The first union, which has existed from all time, is called the perichoretic union where Father, Son and Spirit, are in a face to face relationship together.
- Yet they are distinct as Father, Son and Spirit but in union together in love and purpose and relationship that they were considered one God.
- Father, Son and Spirit wanted to extend that love to all of humanity by forming an eternal relationship of salvation which led to the second union – the hypostatic union.
- This means that when Jesus came to this earth, as God in the flesh – God incarnate – He brought humanity into Himself through His birth, life, death, and resurrection.
- Once again, His divinity stays distinct and our humanity stays distinct even as Jesus is our Savior.
- Yet, we understand from Paul who says in Corinthians, “When He died, we died, when He rose, we rose.”
- So from humanity's standpoint, we know that Jesus came to save the world and He reconciled all humanity to Himself.
- So by Jesus' birth, life death and resurrection, humanity, from God's point of view, has been reconciled, that the barrier wall between God and humanity was taken away.
- Thus, there is no reason that anyone cannot come to a relationship with Father, Son and Spirit.
- So, from God's standpoint, everything has been done.
- But for us to come into a saving relationship, the Holy Spirit then has to reveal that to us by opening our eyes.
- So what we say happen at Pentecost, which was prophesied in Joel 2 and then experienced in Acts 2, was that the Holy Spirit was poured out.
- So the church now is to reach out to those who have not-yet participated in that redemptive relationship with Jesus.

Revelation 22:1 (NASB), Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2) in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

- In Revelation 20:14, we read that, “Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire” – so all sadness and grief is gone.
- This chapter shows that the healing process of humanity is still going on.
- And we also see the number 12 here which represents community and participation

3) There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; 4) they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.

- Now remember when Moses wanted to engage God and see Him face-to-face, what happened?
- Long story short, if we saw God’s face then, we would die.
- Now in the future, we will see God’s face and exist in a relationship forever with the Father. Son and Spirit.
- And “His name will be on our foreheads” meaning that we have an intimate relationship with God.
- “Bond-servants” represent the ministry of all believers serving God in a loving relationship forever and ever.

5) And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

- “And there will no longer be any night” means that the vampires and zombies will be out of business.

6) And he said to me, “These words are faithful and true”; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place. 7) “And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”

- To those who respond to the invitation from God receive a certain blessing, as we shall see.

8) I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. 9) But he said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.”

- We worship God – Father, Son and Spirit who give us our identity – not angels or anything physical.
- We can’t find our identity in other things, which are external and temporary.
- We don’t worship temporary things but rather what is eternal.
- One of our strategic themes is Christ-centered worship.

10) And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. 11) Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.”

- God doesn't force us to accept Him –we make our own choices freely.
- As Deuteronomy tells us, “Choose life or choose death.”
- One might say today, “Choose heaven or choose Hollywood or Las Vegas.
- This is the day of no tears and no fear, no shame, no guilt or doubt.
- But yet, it appears that there are still some who are not believing – so we call them the not-yet-believers – but their opportunity to choose God still continues.

12) “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. 13) I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” 14) Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.

- So, here we see is the third union – the spiritual union where the Holy Spirit has awakened us to the fact that we trust and have faith in our Savior, Jesus Christ.
- So, when we “wash our robes” metaphorically it means that the Holy Spirit has brought us into that union of spiritual participation with Jesus.
- The next verse show us the contrast.

15) Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

- Inside the city of the New Jerusalem, which has its gates open and will never be closed, are only those who are participating in that relationship with God and believe in and trust our Savior.
- Yet, notice there is still room for those who don't have that relationship.
- So, the role of the church, at that time, is to continue to show humanity that they can still have a relationship with God,

16) “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.” 17) The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

- This open invitation from Jesus continues to go into the future to those who have not yet responded to Him.
- This is not universalism which means that everyone will be saved even those who don't seek a relationship with Jesus Christ.
- This shows that everyone is not automatically saved – it takes our desire to be involved.

18) I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book;

- Essentially, this was a warning to the scribes, who were making copies from the original text, no to make any changes.

19) and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

- These are metaphorical statements – “book of life” and “tree of life” – about those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and who have put their trust in Him.

20) He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. 21) The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

- The book of Revelation ends with grace, the grace of the Lord Jesus.
- So what we see is that the church represents community, represents participation, represents the ministry of redemption reaching out and sharing this news to those who haven’t seen it yet.
- And that continues to be the role of the church in the future – as long as needed because “the gates will never close.”
- God will never stop loving people nor extending that grace.
- That’s truly good news.

Communion:

- Now, the bread and wine in Communion today represent our relationship between humanity and God.
- The bread and wine also commemorates this day of Ascension, when all of us rose with Jesus into the heavenly realm.

Closing Prayer