

The Beatitudes of Revelation – Being ready for the Coming of the Lord

Let us just begin with a word of prayer.

Lord, as we continue in Your presence, we do truly want to commit this time into Your hands. Lord, our confession is that apart from You we can do nothing, as far as speaking or hearing. We are so dependent on You. Lord, many words can be said, but if they are not of You, they will fall to the ground. So, we ask for Thy anointing for this time. Be gracious to us, Lord, as we know You are. And we just pray in the wonderful name of Jesus. Amen.

Probably most of you may know the burden on my heart. It went out a little bit in the message for the opening. It is very simple, really; it is that we would be a prepared people for the Lord. I was really touched that it came up a couple of times in our time around the table, and it was rather overwhelming. But you know, as I was preparing for this, I thought of our dear brother Kaung, and I thought how he ever lived in the light of this truth of waiting for the Lord's coming. And as he got older, that burden got stronger and stronger. And I think that is where we need to be. We need to be a people that are mindful of the Lord's coming. Now it is true that some of us may go to see the Lord before the Lord comes. So regardless, we must be prepared. But we do believe His coming is soon. When we look around this world, I am just amazed at what I see, and that the Lord has not come yet. But He knows what He is doing.

Beatitudes

So I want to ask a question. When you think of the word "beatitude," what do you think of? What portion of Scripture do you think of? Probably most of us think of the Sermon On the Mount and the famous beatitudes there. When the Lord spoke to me what He wanted me to share on, I was rather amazed to be honest. It was not

really my first choice of what I thought. But when you search the Scriptures, that word "blessed" that we see in those beatitudes, that Greek word comes up about 49 times in the New Testament. I do not know if you knew that or not. I did not know it. I was rather amazed when I saw it. Therefore, I would like to read several beatitudes that are not in the Sermon On the Mount just to give us a little kind of warm up, if you will.

Luke 1:45 says, "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

This was speaking about Mary when she accepted the word from the angel, and she was called "blessed." And in Romans, these are a couple of my favorite verses. We are going to read a lot of Scriptures today; so be ready for that.

Romans 4:7-8 says, "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT." What a wonderful word!

And last, James 1:12 says, "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

The Seven Beatitudes in the Book of Revelation

There are seven that I would like to look at this morning. And you can probably guess what book they are in—the book of Revelation. And it is interesting that there are seven there when I think about it, because when you read the book of Revelation, there are many sevens. Have you noticed that before? It says that there are seven spirits, Revelation 1:4 and a couple other locations. There are seven churches, seven golden lampstands, seven stars, seven lamps of fire, seven seals, seven horns, seven eyes, seven horns, seven eyes, seven angels, seven trumpets, seven heads, and seven diadems. Do you get the point?

There are seven last plagues, there are seven golden bowls, there are seven mountains, and there are seven kings. Very interesting. There is at least 17, not counting these beatitudes that are in there. And we know that the number seven speaks of completeness. It speaks of perfection, right? And so, it is fitting that they are here in the book of Revelation where we see the completion of what God is after. We see what He is going to do in the end. We know the end, don't we? We have got it written in the book. Praise the Lord.

Let me now read the seven beatitudes that are in Revelation.

The first one is in Revelation 1:3: "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near."

The second one is in Revelation 14:13: And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!' "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

The third one is in Revelation 16:15: ("Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.")

The fourth one is in Revelation 19:9: "Then he *said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he *said to me, "These are true words of God."

The fifth one is in Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years." (the Millennium)

The sixth one is in Revelation 22:7: "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

The seventh one is in Revelation 22:14: "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, these are the seven beatitudes in the book of Revelation. Now as we go through them, I will be reading them a little bit in context so that I am not picking them out of the air, so to speak. And as we go through these, I may share some thoughts you may disagree with. That is okay; I do not have a problem with that. If we catch the spirit of what these beatitudes are saying, that is the important thing and that is what is really on my heart.

The First Beatitude

So let us begin with this first one. Again, it is in Revelation chapter one, and I am going to start reading verse one. But let me say this, I thought about whether I should share this or not, but as we come to the close of the book of Luke, I could not help but have this thought. I wonder if maybe the Lord would lead us into the book of Revelation as a fellowship. Just throwing that out there, I do not know if that is the Lord or not, but as I read through this a few times I was just captured by this book.

So, verse 1 says, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants," (I want to just stop right there for a second and say this is very important that we see who this is for, who this is written for in this book. It says, "to show to His bond-servants," Now who are the bond servants? Basically, that is all born again believers. We are all bond servants. We have all been purchased with a price. We no longer belong to ourselves. We belong to Him only. Thus, we are bond servants, or some versions I think say, "slaves." Thus, we are all bond servants. So, this is written to be given to bond servants.) "the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant, John, who testified to the Word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that

he saw. (And here is our verse.) Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed, (This word “heed” means to attend to carefully, to keep, to guard,) and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.”

Now I think it is very interesting that there is a blessing attached to this book. When I think about it, there ought to be a blessing to every book, but the book of Revelation states there is a blessing to this book. When I considered that, I thought, "Why is there a blessing here to this book?" I think if we look at the book as a whole, we realize it is because it is the revelation of Jesus Christ. It is a full revelation of Jesus Christ. You know, when you think about it, when we look into this book, we see who He is, do we not?

Remember, John was given that vision in Revelation chapter 1 of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we can see who the Lord Jesus Christ is. And then in Revelation 2 and 3, we see Him walking amid the candlesticks, amid the churches. He is examining the churches, and He is looking for Himself.

We can go to Revelation 5, and we see Him there before the throne of God, the Lamb slain, there in the throne of God. We could go on and on, but eventually we see Him coming back. We see Him coming back for His own. I liked that somebody picked that song and ended with that. So, we see Him coming back for His own, but then we see Him coming back in Revelation 19, coming back to this earth to set up His kingdom. And so that is why there is a blessing here. We see a fullness of the Lord Jesus here.

It is also very interesting how it says, “Blessed be he who reads and those who hear.” When I thought about that I thought, "Huh," but remember when this was written, there were individuals that could not read. And so when they assembled, somebody would read the Scriptures, and there would be those that could only hear. That was the common practice in the synagogues with the Jews, and typically,

somebody would get up and read a Scripture. Remember when the Lord went into the synagogue and they handed Him the Book, and He read those verses about Himself. So, there is a blessing to reading and hearing.

Now why is this so important now? I think it is so important now because of what it says at the end of this verse. It says, "For the time is near." *The time is near.* When I read that, I thought, "Well, this was written many centuries ago." But what came to my mind was II Peter where it talks about the mockers who said, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." No, it is not the same; it is progressively getting worse, but they mocked that. And remember that with the Lord, a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as a day. So, the time is near to Him. He lives outside of time, so what is a million years to Him? It is a drop in the bucket.

First, we started off with this prophecy, "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy." This is a book of prophecy in two ways. It is a forthtelling and a foretelling, and both are found in this book. So that is the first beatitude that we find here.

So now, I would just like to read a couple of verses to go along with this matter of hearing.

James 1:22-25: "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does."

That is what our first beatitude said. He who hears and he who does. I like this verse in Luke 12:37 where we find one of these other beatitudes. It says, ""Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them." That is amazing. Amazing. For those that are alert and ready, the Lord is going to come and serve us. Is that not amazing? The King of kings serves us.

And there is a little bit of, if I can say, an exhortation on the warning side. In Revelation 3:3 it says, "So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent."

We see here that this first beatitude right off hits the mark and says, "We need to hear. We need to keep." That is the key to being prepared. And I like this, I will read one more verse here, a couple more.

I John 3:2-3: "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

That is why it is so important that we ever be expecting the Lord's coming because it has this purifying effect on us. If we knew He could come even before I finish this message, would that not be wonderful? We would be ready.

The Second Beatitude

The second beatitude is found in Revelation 14:13, but before that I want to read a few verses that build up to this. I really struggled over how much to read, but it says it is a blessing to read this book. So, we have an opportunity to taste that now. So, I would like to start with Revelation 13:11, and if you are a kind of prophecy freak you are going to like this section that I read. Let me say one other thing, too while it is popping in my mind. This book is written to His bond servants, but that

does not mean an unbeliever cannot be touched by something out of this book because that is how the Lord revealed Himself to me was through aspects of prophecy out of the book of Revelation. So, it is possible that this book can touch anybody, but it is particularly to His bond servants. There is something very special He has for His bond servants. There is something He wants us to enter into, to take part of, to co-partner with Him. We will see that as we go on.

Revelation 13:11-17: "Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who *had the wound of the sword and has come to life. And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name."

I probably do not have to tell you that there has been a lot shared around this within Christendom about this mark of the beast. We see things in place now where this could come at any time, where suddenly, we do away with paper money and all that kind of stuff and receive maybe a mark on our hand that basically has all the data about us and all that good stuff. I do not want to go down that trail, but it is just a sign that we are getting close.

Now, I want to go forward a little bit to Revelation 14 where we find the next beatitude, but I am going to start in verse one.

Revelation 14:1-5: "Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. And they *sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless."

Verses 9-13: "Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name. Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

When I thought about this, "Blessed are the dead," I thought, if you walk up to somebody, particularly if you knew they were not a believer

and said, "There is such a thing as a blessed dead person." They probably would look at you like you are crazy. Blessed are the dead. And when I thought about it, there is probably only a small portion of humanity, and by that, I mean those that are not saved, that might agree with this. In the case of maybe they have a loved one who is dying a very painful death, and they would think, well, they are more blessed if they are dead than they are alive. Maybe not realizing that that is just going to be the beginning of what is horrible for them if they are not saved.

But here it says, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." And so that is why I read these verses beforehand because at this point in time, it is where the beast is coming in. This is when they are going to come in and bring in the mark and whatnot. And if you refuse it, you cannot buy or sell. And if they know you refuse it, you are going to be killed. So, the only way you would survive in this situation is if you became a hermit somewhere. You get off the grid, you throw your phone away, you throw all that stuff away where they could track you down and you become a hermit in a cave somewhere. It would be the only way you would escape. So that is why it says, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!" It would be a way out for you at this point in time. And of course, the wonderful thing is if you die in the Lord, that is a blessed thing. There is the verse that says, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His godly ones." We go to be with the Lord, and it is a blessed thing.

We read these verses about the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation 14:1. And these, I do not want to spend a lot of time because I do not have a lot of time. Nor probably can I speak to it as well as some could, but I think this 144,000 here are overcomers toward the end of the great tribulation. I think that is what this number is. We see another number of those before the throne in Revelation 7. And I think there, it is speaking of all the overcomers from the first century to the end. But here I think it is focusing on these overcomers at this late period. Now,

if this is a literal number or not, I do not know. I do not think it is. I think it is more symbolic. But that is beside the point. There are these that are going to be overcomers at this point in time, at the time of the great tribulation. And at this point in time, there will be those that have already been raptured. They have already been taken up. We saw that in Revelation 12. We do not have time to go into that. But there will be some that are already raptured, and these are some that were left behind. I can only say that it is probably because they were not ready. They were not ripe for the harvest, so to speak. And so here they are, they find themselves in this situation where it is pretty much do or die, if you will.

The wonderful thing is this promise in Revelation 3:10 to those who overcome: "Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth." That is a promise of the Lord to the overcomers of this time. And that is wonderful.

Here we find these ones in this situation. I think it is very interesting because we read Revelation 14:12 which says, "Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus." I looked this verse up in the Weymouth translation, if you are familiar with that, and it is very interesting because here it says, "Here is an opportunity for endurance on the part of God's people, who carefully keep His commandments and the faith of Jesus!" Here is an opportunity. My NASB says, "Perseverance," others say, "Endurance," but here it says an opportunity. What kind of opportunity? I think it is another opportunity to become an overcomer. For those that might have missed the rapture, here is another opportunity for them to overcome before the Lord. Is that not the graciousness of the Lord? He wants us all to be overcomers, all of us. And so, we find these individuals here are given another opportunity. And that is why they will be blessed when they die. And it goes on to say that they may rest from

their labors. They will be able to put all this age, this side behind them, and their deeds will follow them. In other words, they will be rewarded. They will be part of that number of overcomers. So that is the graciousness of the Lord there.

Now, I want to take a little bit of liberty here, if I can, from what this says in Revelation 14:13. I think we can probably apply this to ourselves. It says, "... who die in the Lord from now on." We have an opportunity to die in the Lord from now on. I am not talking physically, obviously. I am talking about spiritually. Paul said at the end of I Corinthians 15:31, "... I die daily." I die daily. That was the attitude of the Apostle Paul. He knew that except he die daily, the life of the Lord could not be manifested through him. He would be a hindrance. His self-life would have been a hindrance to the release of the Lord's life in him unless he died daily. Remember our Lord said in Luke 9:23, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me." So, today we have an opportunity to lay down our lives, that we could be a fit and useful vessel for the Master's use.

Now, the question is: how can we do this? Obviously, I think we all know we cannot do this in our own strength because naturally we love ourselves too much, do we not? If we are honest with ourselves, we love ourselves too much. But the wonderful thing is that the Lord gives us an answer, I think, in Philippians. This was the great passion of Paul's heart.

Philippians 3:10: "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;"

Herein is the answer to how we can do it. And I think it is very interesting, I do not know if you have ever thought of this, but I have often thought, "Why did he put the power of His resurrection first? Why did he not put the fellowship of His sufferings and being conformed to His death first? But it is saying, "the power of His resurrection" first. It

seems backwards in a way, doesn't it? That you would have to be conformed to His death first to be a partaker of that resurrection life, but the reality is we cannot be conformed to His death apart from His resurrection life. It is impossible. That is why I think it is worded in this order. That is the graciousness of the Lord, I think. So as the Lord gives us opportunities to die to self, let us just remember we have a throne of grace to go to where we can receive mercy and help in time of need.

The Third Beatitude

So let us move on to the third one.

Revelation 16:13-16: "And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. ('Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.') And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon." This is the famous last battle, Armageddon.

In my version, Revelation 16:15, which is our beatitude here, is in parentheses. I do not know about your versions, but mine is in parentheses. And so, it is inserted here in the midst of this talk about this gathering together for the last war, the battle of Armageddon. And in comes this verse, "Behold, I am coming like a thief." And I think it is inserted here because this battle of Armageddon is toward the end, is it not? The Lord will be coming back at that point. And so, I think this is inserted here by the Lord because He wants us to remember that what we need to keep uppermost in our mind is that He is coming. And in this case, He is coming like a thief. He does not want us to be caught up in the Battle of Armageddon or other signs or things that are going on. Yes, they can kind of point to His coming quicker, if you will, but that is

not what we are to focus on. We are to focus on His coming. That is what we are looking for.

I got exposed recently to a teaching, and I will not tell you where it came from. This individual is a preacher, and he does not believe in the rapture. He does not believe in such a thing as rapture. He just believes that the Lord will literally come back, personally, and that is it. As I thought about that, then you would be looking for all sorts of other things because the Antichrist must come first before the Lord comes back to this planet, and you would be looking for all these other things that would distract you from the Lord's coming. He gave all these reasons out of Scripture, and I thought, this is something that can really sidetrack us off course of looking and being prepared for the Lord if we get caught up in that.

Anyway, there are parentheses there. But notice what He says here. He talks about needing to be awake and needing to keep your garments. I am just going to read a quick portion out of I Thessalonians about the Lord coming like a thief.

I Thessalonians 5:2 says, "For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night."

I Thessalonians 5:6 says, "So then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober." If there is one thing I want to leave today, it is that we would stay awake, that we would be alert, that we would be sober. That is really what is on my heart.

Revelation 3:2a, the church at Sardis is told, "Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die."

Verse 3b, "If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you." That is the danger of falling asleep. If we get dull in this matter, the Lord will come, and we will be shocked and surprised.

Notice in Revelation 16:15 it also talks about keeping our garments. In some versions it say clothes. But I think another way to translate this, "keeping your garments," is "to put on your clothes." Because garments in the Scriptures primarily have reference to our walk or to our conduct before the Lord, having our garments, keeping our garments. And so, when I thought about this, putting on your clothes, I thought of two portions of Scripture. And I am not going to take the time to read them, but I will give these to you. One of them is in Colossians 3:8-14. And in there we see this principle of the putting off and the putting on—putting off the old man and putting on the new man. That is what that is referring to here. It is like you are taking off these old rags that are not any good. You are taking them off, you are throwing them away, and you are putting on some new clothes. That is basically a principle that is very important to us as Christians. We must put off the old man and put on the new man.

And what does that require on our part? Because there is always a part on our side too. The part on our side is we must be willing to do this. Our will must be engaged in this. But thank God, even the enabling of our will comes from Him, does it not? Doesn't it say that? That He can enable us both to will and to do of His good pleasure? So that is one of the portions there. The other one, of course, is in Ephesians. Very similar, Ephesians 4:20-24. In there again it talks about putting off concerning your former conduct, the old man, and then it talks about putting on the new man which was created according to God in true righteousness and holiness. And in the Colossians verses, it gets very specific about things to put on, such as tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering. What are these? These are just, really, characteristics of the Lord Jesus, are they not? That is what these really are. That is His character. That is why I really like Romans 13:14 that says, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ;" put on the Lord Jesus Christ, "and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lust."

Another simple way of putting this would be to say that we need to abide in Christ. That is abiding in Christ.

The Fourth Beatitude

The fourth beatitude is in Revelation 19:6-9:

"Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he *said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he *said to me, "These are true words of God.""

So here we see the marriage supper of the Lamb. And remember that this book is addressed to bondservants, to Christians. It is not talking here to people of the world, but it is talking to Christians who are to be invited to this special occasion called the marriage supper of the Lamb. And we just read in verse 8 how we are to be prepared for the marriage supper of the Lamb. It is said that they clothe themselves in fine linen, bright and clean, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

How are we to do these righteous acts of the saints? If you look at the parable in Matthew 25 where it talks about the ten virgins, there are five foolish ones and five wise ones. What made the five ready and the other five not ready? Oil. And what does the oil symbolize? The Holy Spirit. So it is through the Holy Spirit that we can be made ready. It is through the Holy Spirit that we can do these righteous acts that it speaks of here to be ready for the Lord's coming. That is such an important thing in this matter of abiding in Christ is that we cooperate

and that we be obedient to the Holy Spirit. In Galatians 5:25 it says, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." That is so crucial for us in cooperating with the Holy Spirit. And so we find that those who have the extra oil are ready to go in with him to the wedding feast, (Matthew 25:10).

In Matthew 22 there is that parable where the king gives the invitation to the wedding feast for his son. You remember that parable? And first they go out and they try to bring in all these individuals and they all have their excuses and say why they cannot come to the wedding feast. And I think there it is referring to the Jews because then the king says, Matthew 22:9 "'Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.'" So they bring in these individuals. But it is very interesting that in verse 11-12 of that parable in Matthew 22, it says, "'But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, and he *said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless.'" He was speechless. He had nothing he could say. I think he knew that he was not really prepared and ready for the wedding feast.

Actually, when we think about being invited to this marriage supper of the Lamb, our brother Kaung pointed this out in one of his books, that there are two garments required to be ready for this wedding feast of the Lamb. The first garment is, of course, Christ as our righteousness. Christ must be our righteousness; in other words, you must be saved. You cannot go in unless you are saved.

But the second one is this garment that is other than the first one. And this other garment is the one where the Holy Spirit will be building, if you will, or transforming and conforming us to the image of Christ. He will be building Christ's characters in us which is the other garment that is going to be required. In other words, it is what we have already said

about walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, and allowing the Holy Spirit to embroider the life of the Lord Jesus into our lives.

It says in Psalm 45:13: “The King's daughter is all glorious within; Her clothing is interwoven with gold.”

Gold speaks of the nature of God. So this speaks of ones who are already born again. They have the life of Christ in them, but it talks about them also as having this embroidered work over this outer garment to be able to be wedded to the King. And so that speaks of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives as He embroiders that life of Christ into us as we cooperate. Remember that cooperation is very important in this Christian walk. As we cooperate with Him and remain under when He brings us into circumstances, that will enable us to be in that place where that embroidering can be done. It is then that He is able to do that work, and He is able to prepare us for that wedding feast on that day.

The Fifth Beatitude

The fifth beatitude is in Revelation 20:4-6: “Then I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.” (And here is our verse in verse 6.) “Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”

In verse 4 we see three categories of ones' named who are going to be overcomers. I do not want to spend any time going into that, but I

want to really focus on this thing that is called the first resurrection. It is very interesting because there are a couple of other verses in the Bible that speak of this same thing, but in a little different term. Let me just read them quickly to you. Hebrews 11 speak about all these ones that have overcome. We call them “the heroes of the faith, and what they did to overcome.

Hebrew 11:35: “Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;”

Luke 20:35 is when Jesus was speaking to the Sadducees and the ones that did not believe in the resurrection from the dead, and He answered this way to them: “But those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage;”

So there is an aspect in which we become worthy to attain to that age. Now what is this age? This age that the Lord is referring to here is the millennium age.

Now all the Jews were very aware that when the Messiah would come, He would set up His Kingdom and reign and that is what they were looking for. That is what their hope was. They were looking for this age when the Messiah would come back, and they would be freed from the Romans or whoever. And they all looked forward to be partakers of that age. But the Lord says that you must be worthy to attain that age and the resurrection from the dead. Now we have already talked about how to be worthy to some degree in keeping your garments.

But Paul also said this in Philippians 3. I will pick it up in verse 11 because we read Philippians 3:10 earlier about the power of His resurrection, etc. And verse 11 is why Paul wanted to enter into the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings and being conformed to His death: “in order that I may attain to the resurrection

from the dead.” Does that not sound funny? Paul is talking about attaining to the resurrection from the dead. “Paul, do you not know that you are going to be resurrected from the dead? Do you not know that?” Of course, he knew that, but here he is talking about a very unique resurrection from the dead. He is talking about what it says back in this verse in Revelation, the *first* resurrection.

Now is he talking *first* in the sense of a number or is he talking about something else here? I looked that word up and it can be translated in different ways. It can be translated “first.” It can be translated like it says in Hebrews 11:35, “better.” And I think probably that is a better way to look at it; it is a better resurrection. This is the resurrection which Paul was looking for. He realized this was going to be a reward for the overcomers to be part of the first resurrection. And the fruit of that would be, of course, that they would be a priest of God and they would reign with Him for a thousand years. Unfortunately, within Christianity, there are some that believe that all that is required to gain the wedding feast or to gain this matter of the better resurrection means you just have to be born again. If you are born again, you get it all. And I think Scripture speaks contrary to that. It speaks of being ready. It speaks of allowing that work of the Lord in your life to the point where you are at that place where you are worthy, by His grace, to attain to these things.

The Sixth Beatitude

The sixth beatitude is in Revelation 22:7: "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

Here we see the Lord in His mercy repeating what He has already said in Revelation 1:3, where He talked about Him coming quickly and heeding. The Lord knows that we are just dust. He remembers we are just dust. And in His mercy, He does not mind repeating things to us and reminding us. Even as you who have children, or now have grown children, had to repeat yourself to your kids sometimes. “No, do not put

your hand on the stove. You will burn yourself." The Lord is very gracious to us as sheep, and He wants to remind us again. "Behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book." And notice also in Revelation 22, "And behold, I am coming quickly" is repeated two more times in verses 12, 20: "Behold, I am coming quickly." Do you think He is trying to make a point?

The Seventh Beatitude

So last, let us go to the seventh beatitude.

Revelation 22:14 "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."

But first let me point out in Revelation 22:12 where He repeats again: ""Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done." There is a difference between gift and reward. And we need to know that distinction when we read the Scriptures, otherwise we can be confused. And that is why we have two camps in Christianity today over this matter of salvation. Some believe once saved, always saved, and that is it. Some say, "You are saved by grace, but you have got to continue, or you lose it all." I think where they are confused is that they do not understand the distinction between gift and reward.

What is the gift? The gift is eternal life in Jesus Christ, Romans 6:23. It is a gift; eternal life is a gift. But there is the aspect of a reward to the believer. We have already touched on a couple of these rewards of reigning with Christ, of being invited to the wedding feast (which have to do with the millennium, the thousand year reign of Christ upon this earth). These are rewards; these are rewards for the overcomer. That is why they are blessed. These rewards are a blessed thing, and that is what the Lord wants for us. The Lord wants what is best for us.

Therefore, He puts it out there for us in this way when he says, “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me,”

It is interesting in Revelation 3:4-5a, that He said to the church at Sardis: “But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. ‘He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments.’” Wonderful! There will be this other white garment to the overcomer. We see that in Revelation 7 when it speaks of those overcomers there. They are given white robes.

In Revelation 22:14a it says, “Blessed are those who wash their robes.” (Be ready.) And when I considered this, I thought, wash my robes? it is speaking of my life, my character, my conduct. And my mind immediately went to 1 John 1:7 and 9, which are critical verses for us as believers. It says, “But if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (v. 7). Our robes get washed. As we walk in the light, our robes get washed. Is that not wonderful? But what if we do not walk in the light? What if we stumble? It goes on to say in verse 9: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” All provisions are made there for us; all provisions to be overcomers.

They Overcame the Enemy

In closing, Revelation 12:11 gives the description of the overcomer. It says, “And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb ...” Number one, I am so glad that was mentioned first. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb. They are talking about overcoming the enemy, the enemy of our souls. He does not want us to gain any of these things we are talking about. He comes to steal, kill, and destroy. But we overcome him by the blood of the Lamb. Thank God for the power of the blood. Everything that is under the blood will not come up on that day. I remember brother Kaung saying that once,

in reference to the judgment seat of Christ, he said, "Everything under the blood will not come up on that day." That is so reassuring. And it says, "and because of the word of their testimony;" their words match their lives, "and they did not love their lives even when faced with death." They did not love their lives even to death. They were willing to give up their self-life to follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Praise the Lord!

We thank You, Lord, for these beatitudes in this book. Lord, how You want us to be partakers with You, not only here but in the age to come. How You desire for us to be overcomers because it was in Your heart all along that we would share dominion with You, Lord. So, we thank You for Your Word. Lord, we want to be those that stay awake, that are alert, that heed Your word, Lord, that are those that will follow the Lamb wherever He will go. Lord, may it be so. Lord, we know we can only do this by Your grace. Lord, we have not the ability in ourselves, but we thank You, Lord, that You have made all provision for us and that the Holy Spirit will not let us go. He will continue to woo us and work in our lives to bring us into all the truth. Lord, we just thank You for that and we just pray in Your precious name. Amen.