

Sermon for November 3, 2024 – All Saints' Day

Isaiah 65:17-25 (EHV)

Theme: **Imagine what it will be like...**

- 1) Unending joy!
- 2) No curse!
- 3) Perfect peace!

¹⁷Watch this! I am about to create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered. They will not come to mind. ¹⁸Instead, rejoice and celebrate forever, because of what I am creating. Watch this! I am about to create Jerusalem to be a source of gladness, and her people will be a source of joy. ¹⁹I also will be glad because of Jerusalem, and I will rejoice over my people. The sound of weeping will not be heard in her again, nor will the sound of crying. ²⁰There will never again be an infant there who lives for only a few days, or an elderly man who does not fill out all his days, for one who dies at a hundred will be considered a young man, and one who fails to attain the age of one hundred will be regarded as cursed. ²¹Then they will build houses and live in them. They will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²²They will not build a house and have another person live in it. They will not plant and have another person eat the crop, for the days of my people will be like the days of a tree, and my chosen ones will enjoy all the work of their hands. ²³They will not labor only to receive nothing, and they will not give birth to children doomed to disaster, for they will be offspring who are blessed by the LORD, and their descendants will be with them. ²⁴Then even before they call, I will answer. While they are still speaking, I will hear. ²⁵The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and lions will eat straw like cattle, but the serpent will eat dust as its food. They will not harm or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain, says the LORD.

Regarding the last days, Jesus predicted: “⁶ You will hear of wars and rumours of wars... ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom... ⁹... you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other... ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.”ⁱ

Everything Jesus foretold seems to be unfolding in today’s world. So, what should we do about it? Should we worry about every negative news story and live in fear? Absolutely not. Instead, our Savior calls us to lift our heads high, intensify our evangelism efforts, and joyfully anticipate the glorious salvation He promises to grant us at the end of time.ⁱⁱ Why? Because God assures us that He will raise the dead on the Last Day and welcome believers into a magnificent new paradise where the evil of this present age will no longer touch us.

With the prophet Isaiah as our guide, let’s reflect on the future God is preparing and the hope it offers us under the theme: **Imagine what everlasting life with God will be like.** There will be 1) unending joy, 2) no curse of sin, 3) and perfect peace.

Part One: There will be unending joy.

Our sermon text begins with the LORD making a wonderful promise to all his faithful followers, encouraging them to persevere through their hardships because of what he is preparing for them.

¹⁷Watch this! I am about to create new heavens and a new earth.

The Bible warns that our current earth will be destroyed when Christ returns on the Last Day.ⁱⁱⁱ Out of its ashes, God will create a new home for us, one reminiscent of the Garden of Eden before sin entered the world. There will be no suffering or death on this new earth—nothing that would cause us heartache or pain.

The LORD says:

The former things will not be remembered. They will not come to mind.

Does this mean that believers will forget everything they ever did while living on this earth? Not necessarily. Memories may remain, but they will bring no pain, sorrow, or temptation to sin. Why? Because Jesus paid for our sins in full, our consciences will be completely clean with no shame before God. We experience this peace of conscience now by faith, but when Christ returns, it will be fully realized within us. Our sinful natures will be gone forever, allowing us to focus solely on the LORD and His magnificent love for us in Christ.

¹⁸Instead, rejoice and celebrate forever, because of what I am creating. Watch this! I am about to create Jerusalem to be a source of gladness, and her people will be a source of joy. ¹⁹I also will be glad because of Jerusalem, and I will rejoice over my people. The sound of weeping will not be heard in her again, nor will the sound of crying.

Jerusalem represents the Holy Christian Church – those who, in genuine faith, trust in Jesus alone for salvation. Because the Holy Christian Church preached the pure Gospel of Jesus, she will be a source of unending joy for all who believed her message. Oh, how I look forward to the revelation of this truth when Christ comes again. Let me explain why.

If you have ever faced anxiety or depression, you know about the constant sadness or fear that makes you want to retreat from the world. You feel drained of energy, want to avoid others and struggle with feelings of helplessness or worthlessness. You might even question how God could ever love you. All these things you feel are a result of sin's curse over us.

But look at what God promises: a place where there will be no crying, sorrow, worry or depression, but only joy forever. Imagine living in a state of perpetual happiness with a smile on your face and a sense of well-being all around you. This is what awaits believers in paradise, all because of God's unwavering, forgiving love for us in Christ that removes sin's curse forever.

Yes, whenever you feel anxious or downcast, let the thought of the everlasting paradise God is preparing comfort you. Imagine living with God in unending joy. This will be your reality as you

cling to Jesus in faith. How do I know? Because God loved you so deeply that He gave His one and only Son to save you from your sins.^{iv} The Bible constantly affirms this beautiful truth. Let it sustain you through every dark moment in your life: Jesus is coming again soon to take sin's curse away from you so you can live in unending joy.

Part Two: There will be no curse of sin.

What will the new heaven and earth be like? Because our human minds can't grasp the immense joy that awaits us there, God uses a series of profound understatements to convey it, emphasizing the removal of sin's curse.

He says:

²⁰There will never again be an infant there who lives for only a few days, or an elderly man who does not fill out all his days, for one who dies at a hundred will be considered a young man, and one who fails to attain the age of one hundred will be regarded as cursed.

The Bible clearly states that wherever sin exists, there will also be death. The two are inseparable. The fact that infants and the unborn die illustrates how deeply sin has corrupted our world.

But can you imagine a world where no mother must endure a miscarriage and no father must bury his child? Can you envision a place where a 100-year-old person is regarded as merely a youth, and their death, if it were even possible, would be viewed as a tragedy because they died too young? That is the essence of life on God's new earth. People will live forever and never die. Why? Because sin's curse will be completely eradicated. And if there is no sin, there can be no death.

²¹Then they will build houses and live in them. They will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

²²They will not build a house and have another person live in it. They will not plant and have another person eat the crop.

The people of ancient Israel often lived in fear, tormented by foreign raiders who would destroy or take away what they had planted or built. They prayed fervently for relief!

God promises a future where there will be no need for desperate cries for help because no one will be able to take away the blessings that He provides, nor will they prevent us from enjoying them. All dangers and frustrations of our current world will be gone.

For the days of my people will be like the days of a tree, and my chosen ones will enjoy all the work of their hands. ²³They will not labor only to receive nothing, and they will not give birth to children doomed to disaster, for they will be offspring who are blessed by the LORD, and their descendants will be with them.

Did you know that some trees alive today appear to have thrived for thousands of years, since early after the flood? These trees seem to live forever! When Christ brings us into His new earth, we will live forever in His peace. There will be no toil, labour, or frustration—only joy and satisfaction in all that we do. Why? Because sin's curse will be no more. We will be a people blessed by the Lord—holy, precious, and loved. Every trace of evil we experience will be removed forever, and we will dwell with the LORD in perfect peace.

Part 3: There will be perfect peace

²⁴Then even before they call, I will answer. While they are still speaking, I will hear.

During our earthly journey, the Lord does not always respond to our prayers instantly. He teaches us to wait patiently for His answers so he may strengthen our faith. Waiting, however, is hard.

Can you imagine what it would be like if God answered our prayers even before we got to "Amen"? That is exactly what God promises for us in paradise: He will immediately grant us everything we ask for in prayer. Why? Because we are His dearly loved children who will be living with Him in all holiness and righteousness. We will be at peace.

²⁵The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and lions will eat straw like cattle, but the serpent will eat dust as its food. They will not harm or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain, says the LORD.

Can you envision a world where predators and prey coexist peacefully? That's what God's new creation will be like. Rich and poor, young and old, male and female, liberal and conservative, Republican and Democrat: we will all live in perfect harmony in God's kingdom. Why? Because when Christ returns on the last day, He will remove the sin that divides humanity. All fear and suspicion will cease. Believers from every tribe, nation, people, and language will be united in peace. Every creature will live in perfect harmony with us and one another. None will kill or consume another; they will eat only the vegetation God provides—except for the serpent, who will continue to eat dust.

And why is that? Probably as a reminder of what happened when the devil tempted Adam and Eve into sin. When the LORD cursed the serpent for its role in tempting our first parents, He also promised that a special descendant of Eve would restore the relationship they lost with Him. The serpents' humiliation in paradise would serve as a continual reminder of that promise and of the Saviour who fulfilled it! Because Jesus died on the cross for our sins, we stand before God free, forgiven, and righteous through faith in Him. We are no longer slaves of the devil but children of God, destined to live in peace with both Him and each other when Christ returns on the Last Day.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we are living in a world filled with darkness and peril for our souls. The unbelieving world continually tempts us to forsake the truth of God's Word. How do we face these trials? By holding onto Jesus and the glorious paradise He secured for us through His life, death, and resurrection.

Just think about what it will be like living in unending joy, free from the curse and consequences of sin, and experiencing perfect peace and harmony forever with God and the myriads of believers from around the globe who have gone before us. Let this certain hope strengthen you as you anticipate Christ's return, remembering what the apostle John wrote: *The one who testifies about these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints. Amen.*^v

ⁱ Cf. Matthew 24:6-13

ⁱⁱ Cf. Luke 21:28

ⁱⁱⁱ Cf. 2 Peter 3:12,13

^{iv} Cf. John 3:16

^v Revelation 22:20-21 (NIV84)