

Revelation 1:4-20

Greetings, With Love, From The Almighty

Good Morning Church!

It is great to see you all this morning.

We will be continuing our study of the Revelation of Jesus Christ this morning.

We will continue in chapter 1.

If you missed the introduction to this study, it can be found on our website.

Last time we were together, we looked at the first three verses of this Revelation.

In the introductory verses, we learned of the subject of this writing.

In verse 1 it reads, The Revelation of Jesus Christ.

You see Jesus Christ will be unveiled, that is His person, His program, and power.

We saw the chain of authorship, from God the Father, to His Son, Jesus Christ, given through His angel, to the Apostle John, who then was to give it to the church.

Lastly, in those first three verses we understood there is a great blessing that is given to those who undertake the reading, and hearing and keeping of these writings.

We understood last time, this Apocalyptic Book was not to be sealed up and hidden away, in fact, this writing is for today.

Now this morning, we will look at the greeting set forth in this book found in verses 4-8.

Now this Book of Revelation is a violent Book.

It is filled with God's stored up fury and wrath toward the wicked men.

This book will be vindication for all the evils Satan and his rebellious followers have committed against God and His followers.

The torrent of God's wrath that has been held back since Christ died on Calvary's Cross, will one day be released, and judgment will finally be poured out in a relentless way.

This wrath has been held back, because God has wished that none should perish, and He hopes that many will come to His Grace.

Yet, there will be a time this Grace Period is over, and that is what John was entrusted to reveal.

All that is revealed in this book will be terrifying and it will be like nothing this world has ever seen before.

Yet, before all of God's fury is revealed, John's pen will be inspired to write a gentle greeting and reminder of God's Love and Grace.

In this section, after this wonderful greeting of love, we will see the first of many outbursts of praise.

Lastly, in verse 8 we will see the testimony of the Almighty Triune God.

These five verses are packed full of amazing truths.

And we will spend the whole morning in this wonderful Greeting.

Let's pray before we get into it...

Greeting the Seven Churches

1:4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Now let us go back through and glean all we can from these incredible verses.

First, we see the politeness and the gentleness of God in this greeting.

1:4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

We see immediately a direction is given to the recipients of this letter.

Last week, we saw that any believer who reads and hears and keeps these things will be blessed.

However, there is an immediate intended audience.

The apostle John was the pastor at the church in Ephesus before and after his exile to the island of Patmos.

He was inspired to write to only seven churches in what he refers to as Asia.

This today would be in Turkey, not the Asia we know today.

It is not hard to imagine that the Apostle John had oversight to these churches in the region, and possibly many more.

Now God, only has John address 7 of the many churches in that province at that time.

Now before we go any farther, we need to talk about the number seven.

We will see it repeatedly in the Apocalypse.

Seven is referred to as God's number of completeness or totality.

Seven days make up the complete story of creation, and also determines a full week.

Josh our worship leader has informed me that seven notes make up a complete musical scale.

There are seven colors in a rainbow.

In the Word of God, we see in Joseph's visions, seven was the number revealed to him regarding the years of plenty and the years of famine.

Jericho was passed about seven times.

Naaman the Leper was instructed to dip himself seven times in the Jordan River to be cleansed.

Nebuchadnezzar's mind was lost for seven years, in his great humbling before God.

There are seven petitions in the Lord's prayer.

Seven loaves of bread fed the multitudes.

Jesus spoke seven times from the cross.

And as we will see the number seven will be a key number in the book of Revelation.

And here the first mention of a series of sevens in Revelation comes before us, as John addresses this letter to the seven churches.

****Map****

Why these seven? Geographically they form somewhat of a circle. Colossae is close by and had a prominent church, but why is it left out?

There were other churches in the region, but only these seven will be addressed.

Now remember the meaning of the number seven, completeness or wholeness.

In these seven churches, we will see a wholeness of the church at large in multiple aspects.

We will see in these seven churches, they present us with a full picture of church history, from the apostolic age, and every age of Christianity all the way to the church of the last days, the Lukewarm and compromised church.

Also, in these seven churches we will see they are illustrative of conditions within the church today, and every age.

These instructions that will be given to these churches will have application for the whole Church Era, no matter what part of that age they are reading it in.

It applied to the first church as well as any modern church today.

We will also see, it directly speaks to individual church bodies, as well as the individual believer.

This is a whole, complete picture of the Church Era, no matter what region or denomination or even time period it is read in.

In almost every corner of the world, there is some form of Christian church.

There are some churches where the leadership has departed from the faith, there are others who are compromised and backslidden.

There are churches all over the world that are faithful to God's Word, and are lovers of truth, and faithful to their duty.

There are some churches who are focused on foreign missions.

Some churches that are inward focus they delight in teas and social gatherings.

There are churches where the woman have gone to war with one another, and divisions have come.

There are wealthy and very poor churches.

There are church buildings that are marvelous and speak of great opulence and success, and there are churches that are hiding in hidden rooms.

Some are steeped in tradition, and a false piety.

And we will find in the weeks to come, when we get to the seven churches that Jesus will very clearly speak for the church to whom this letter is addressed, and even the churches that came after them, and even to the church today.

These seven churches are complete representations of all the churches in the world no matter what time period they existed.

We will discuss this more in the weeks to come.

Now although the message that is being sent is one of correction, wrath and judgment we see here in the opening script there is a blessing of Grace and Peace.

Rev 1:4 Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come...

It is an amazing thing to recognize here, before the seals of judgment are broken, before the trumpets are blown, and the bowls of God's wrath poured out against the godless in this world, that God Himself comforts the believer here.

He reminds the Christian reading this letter, that His Grace is upon them, we are covered and assured through His Grace.

And with this Grace of God, that is finding His unmerited favor, and forgiveness of our sins, we are then at peace with God.

The peace of God overwhelms our hearts and minds. These gifts of blessings are for the believer only, and are an assurance for us.

John explains this is **from Him who is and who was and who is to come...**

Now these words describe God the Father as the Lord of all eternity, who is timeless.

His Name in the Hebrew is Yahweh, which has the meaning "I Am."

In English “I Am” remains in the present tense, but in the Hebrew, it contains all the tenses used here in Revelation 1:4.

In essence He is declaring here, “I Am he who is, and who was and is to come. Stedman

This Grace and Peace comes from God the Father, Yahweh first.

Then next, we see something in that verse that really confuses many people.

Rev 1:4

and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

You see we have the Trinity in view here.

The Grace and Peace that can only come from God.

So why the mention of Seven Spirits who are before His throne?

Some have interpreted this to mean the seven angels of the seven churches we will meet in the weeks to come.

But never in scripture do we see Grace and Peace offered from an angel or spirit.

These can only be given through God.

Now remember when things get confusing in the book of Revelation, we must search the scriptures for our meanings.

We see that Grace and Peace are coming from the Triune God, which God the Father is mentioned first, second we see this reference must be in connection with the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

Now what we have to do is search the scriptures to see if there is ever a reference to the Holy Spirit in terms of seven?

Well in fact, there is... speaking of the very Spirit that will empower Jesus, Isaiah speaks in **Isa 11:1-2**

... Turn to Isaiah, and underline these seven attributes given.

Isa 11:1-2 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,

The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,

The Spirit of counsel and might,

The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

We see here seven attributes of the Holy Spirit, remember the number seven is the number of completeness.

And we see the sevenfold ministry of the Holy Spirit here in Isaiah.

****Slide****

1. The Spirit of the Lord
2. The Spirit of Wisdom
3. The Spirit of Understanding
4. The Spirit of Counsel
5. The Spirit of Might
6. The Spirit of Knowledge
7. The Spirit of Fear of the Lord

It would be good to underline these in your Bible.

Now, no created being could join the Godhead here in this greeting other than the Holy Spirit, so these seven Spirits before the Lord are understood through the lens of scripture.

There is One Spirit in a sevenfold perfection.

Isaiah describes the activities of the Third Person of the Trinity for us.

This Spirit according to Isaiah would be found in the Man Christ Jesus.

And we see here the full Trinity in view in this Greeting of Grace and Peace, after Yahweh and the Holy Spirit are mentioned we see in...

Rev 1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

We see the source of this benediction concludes as Grace and Peace come from Jesus as well.

We see Him here with a Threefold Title.

Now do not miss the number 3 in all of this.

3 represents Divine completeness and perfection in the scriptures.

We have the Three Parts of the Godhead, and now Jesus is referred to with a threefold title, the faithful witness, and the first born from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth as well.

The first being the Faithful Witness.

Jesus Christ is a faithful witness of God the Father, He came to show us the Father.

Remember Jesus' dialogue with Philip on the last night before He went to the cross.

John 14:7-11 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." 8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father,

and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

If you want to see God, look at His Son, Jesus, who was His faithful witness.

Understand too, that today God wants to reveal Himself through Jesus' followers.

God intends to show the world Himself through you and I.

Remember in **Acts 1:8** Jesus said... **But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

You see Christian, we look to Jesus as our faithful witness, and in turn, the world looks to us to see Jesus.

It is a humbling thing, and a great honor that He has entrusted us too, to bear witness of Jesus Christ.

Next, John explains Jesus was **Rev 1:5 the firstborn from the dead**

This term here is not referring to the first person raised from the dead.

We know Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, and even prophets in the Old Testament performed these kinds' miracles.

But any human who rose again also died again.

Now, I imagine those who were raised perhaps were pretty bummed about having to come back to this life after seeing the next.

If I ever die, and John and the Elders here decided to lay hands be on me and ask for me to be brought back to this life, I will be pretty upset.

After being with Jesus in glory, being absent from this body, and after being with Jesus, if awake to because of your prayers, I will be greatly disappointed.

However, in scripture others were raised from the dead before Jesus.

This term firstborn from the dead means first in priority.

This is speaking of prominence; Jesus is the most important Person to have ever been raised from the dead.

Another thing that sets Jesus apart in His resurrection from the dead, is He did not die again.

He lives forevermore, to make intercession between God and man.

He will never see corruption or death; He defeated death so we too can have a hope of eternal life.

So Jesus is the Faithful Witness, Firstborn from the Dead, and finally the **Rev 1:5 the ruler over the kings of the earth.**

This is a title that Jesus will assume more vividly in the Kingdom Age.

Right now, we see a world in complete chaos and rebellion toward God.

We see the ruler of this world is a liar and a deceiver; he has come to kill, steal and destroy.

We see the effects of this fallen ruler of this world all around us.

You see God had intended for man to rule over this world in **Gen 1:26** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Satan came a deceived man, and took dominion and rule from him.

He is referred to in **Eph. 2:2** as the **prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.**

You remember when Jesus was being tempted in the wilderness for 40 days and nights, Satan made a claim that Jesus never refuted...

Luke 4:5-7 Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7 Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."

This world for the meantime will only know war, pestilence and disaster as long as Satan is the prince. Yet one day soon, Jesus will come back to do away with Satan for all eternity.

Jesus will take His place as the rightful ruler over the kings of the earth.

This is the hope we Christians have to carry us through the deception and insanity of the day.

This is why this letter was written for the church of Jesus Christ.

In John's day, they were persecuted and hated, in Satan's system of rebellion to all ways that are right and true.

Today, the same satanic system marches against all truth and reason.

You are the most despised group in this chaotic society, and this letter reminds us, that one day the things will be made right.

And Truth will prevail, the deception will be done away with, and peace and prosperity will be under the ruler of the kings of the earth.

Now John, as his own pen is writing down these inspired truths, he bursts out in his first doxology and begins to praise God with this threefold praise.

5b To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

John is overwhelmed by all that God has revealed to him in the introduction and gives this threefold praise to God.

This is a powerful portion of praise in its three essential themes.

The first theme explaining He is a God who loves us!

Our New King James bible put the word loved us, but the word is really in the present tense.

It should say loves us.

Now, listen to this, I do not know what you are going through right now.

I imagine many of you have trials and burdens that are pressing against your life right now.

Perhaps you have made some foolish choices and are paying for your decisions; perhaps you are here this morning after period in your life where you were wayward and lost.

Or, just the darkness of this world has you overwhelmed right now, the treachery and evil some people have shown toward you, the harm they have inflicted upon you has you beat down.

Well, whatever you are going through right now, what is it in comparison to the God of the universe, the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, loving you.

Despite ourselves, He loves us, the Lord Jesus Christ Loves you this morning.

Do not ever entertain the thought that God does not love you.

He does, He so greatly loves you, present tense.

He loves you even in spite your rebellion and sin.

Now understand that when the truth of this really sets in, when you begin to understand that even while you were yet a sinner, Christ loved you so much, that He died for you, the thought of it all changes life for the good.

To meditate on His love for us, is overwhelming to say the least, when truly reflected on in the light of scripture, it can do nothing but draw you into a deeper relationship with Him.

God loves you this morning, John here is overwhelmed by the thought.

And because He loves us John says next that He **Rev 1:5 washed us from our sins in His own blood...**

Jesus, in His precious act of going to the cross, He breaks the shackles of our sin and shame.

He sets us free by His blood.

Now maybe you are in bondage to destructive habits this morning.

Understand the cleansing of Jesus' blood is the only freedom you can have from those things that have you so easily entangled.

Those addictions and enslavements which torment our lives, and hold us down.

The blood of Jesus Christ gives us the power to break free of sin.

Charles Wesley wrote a wonderful Hymn that states

He breaks the power of canceled sin

And sets the captives free:

His blood can make the foulest clean,

His blood availed for me.

If you are in bondage this morning, listen to this wonderful truth John has penned for us to read.

You are loved by Jesus who died to cleanse you from the foulest of sins.

You can be free this morning, if you come to Him.

Look at the third part of the doxology or praise **Rev 1:6**
6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and
Father

Not only are we loved and freed from our sin, but we are made a kingdom of priests.

The Amplified Version more accurately states this verse... **Rev 1:6 And formed us into a kingdom (a royal race), priests to His God and Father**

AMP

Now listen, all of us are sinners, naturally separated from God because of our hearts rebellion toward Him.

When we come to faith in Jesus Christ, we find oneness and a relationship with God once again.

He has gathered those sinners, who have received His grace, into a special Kingdom, and we are taken out from the rebellious kingdom of this world, and brought into His Holy Kingdom.

Where we are then declared priests.

We are a Kingdom of priests.

Now a priest in the Old Testament had a twofold job.

He was to bridge the gap between God and man.

The priest worked to bring people near to God.

When he was working as mediator, he wore a breastplate with twelve stones representing the twelve tribes of Israel.

Thus he represented man before God.

The second function was to represent God before man.

He performed the sacrifices, explained their purposes to the sinner, and encouraged repentance of the sinner before a Holy God.

The priest was the representative between God and man.

Today all believers are called to the function of priest. Listen, when you see a co-worker in pain or in distress, you are the priest to bring them to our God, who declares of Himself, "Come to Me all you who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

When a family member is lost in their sin, and at the end of their rope you are the bridge, with a message of hope, that Jesus died for their sins, and provided a way to be free of the turmoil that they are in.

Your children are looking to you to help them navigate through the deception of this world, to bring them to the Faithful Witness.

You are a kingdom of priests, such a holy and prestigious calling.

That should be humbling, and should perhaps cause you to do an inventory of who or what your life is truly representing.

Are you acting in this calling as a priest, for God the Father to a lost world?

It is sobering to think that God has chosen us for this, but He has, and we need to walk worthy of this calling. Now, at the thought of all of this, John ends that verse with

Rev 1:6 to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

As John brings a climax to this praise.

Now we will notice, as the Revelation of Jesus Christ is unveiled in John's writings there will be an increase in praise that is offered to Christ.

Every time praise comes forth in Revelation it increases in intensity.

It is like a man who receives a gift from a friend.

Who when he receives the gift he thanks the friend of his, and explains how wonderful it is he thought of him.

Next, as he unwraps the gift, and as he is unwrapping, he seeing a box, with a picture of a new wallet, he

again thanks the friend, “Oh, How wonderful, a new wallet.”

As He pulls the wallet out, he looks inside, and sees \$100 in cash in the wallet, and he is moved to even more gratitude and thanks.

And as he looks through the pockets of the wallet, he sees a check, with a substantial amount of money in it, enough to care for the man and his family for many years.

From that point, the emotion of the moment erupts into enormous praise and thanksgiving.

Now, as John unwraps this Revelation, he will, as more and more is unveiled erupt into increasingly amounts of praise.

This is the first of which he continues next...

7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

This is a depiction of a coming Judge.

The first time this world saw Jesus, He came from a virgin's womb, born in manger, lived in poverty, came humbly, and He died unjustly.

The first time this world beheld Him, He came as Savior, and He came to deal with sin through the sacrifice of Himself.

The second time this world will see Jesus, He will come with Judgment.

At Jesus' first coming, He dealt with sin, at His second coming He will deal with the sinner.

You see we must relate to Jesus from verses 5 and 6 as the One who loves us, and freed us from our sin by His Blood, or we will face Him in light of verse 7 under His coming Judgment.

Listen, if you are here this morning unwilling to deal with God, in this Era of Grace, to know Him by His love, He will one day come to you as your Judge.

This verse seven is looking ahead at what Revelation will entail.

Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth soon to set up His Kingdom.

The Age of Man is almost over. Chuck Smith

This world is going to be destroyed, and every system of corruption that now rules unchecked will be held accountable.

Remember what Jesus said of those days in Matthew.

Matt 24:22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

In those days, the terrible wrath of God will be poured out on a rebellious mankind.

And here in verse 7 we see here the Jewish Nation, who pierced Jesus, along with all those who are on earth, they will together mourn as they see the Truth they denied within their own hearts is now revealed before them.

This is referring to the second coming of Christ.

Where the Jews eyes will be opened and their hearts will understand as Zechariah the prophet explains...

Zech. 12:10 then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

The Jews will weep over the fact they failed to recognize Jesus as their Messiah.

John says that not only the Jews but also all the tribes of the earth.

Now, this was a great hope for the believer in John's day, who would be wondering if perhaps their God was real.

How could such horrible things happen to the church, if God was for them?

As Domitian turned up every stone to kill those who followed Jesus.

The Christian in John's day would have a hope, that one day the tides would turn, the King of kings will come and do away with the injustice in this world.

It is a hope they needed to push through.

And this Revelation does the same for us today...

We are reminded by scripture that those of us who have placed our faith in Jesus Christ will be more than conquerors one day.

In fact, the Bible is clear, that at this moment of Jesus' return, the saints who were raptured 7 years before the Second Coming of Christ will return with Him to this earth to rule and reign.

Jude 14-15 Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Col 3:4

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

You who are in Christ in this Era, will one day rule and reign as priests in the New Kingdom.

You see He is coming in the clouds here, with the church, Daniel too prophesied of this event...

Dan 7:13 "I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, One like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.

Jesus will come in all His Power and Splendor coming with the clouds of heaven.

You see this will not be a secret coming; it will not be as some people claim today, to be in a secret chamber.

Every eye shall see Him.

You know, I see a common thread in all these false doctrines, they promise a manifestation of Jesus Christ, that it is coming, "just be patient, it might be tonight, it might be next week."

Sometimes they set a date, as one local particular prophet did; he claimed Jesus would come before 2016 was over.

And when He did not, the false teacher was then forced to explain that it is only a secret manifestation of Christ to a privileged few.

And you know that is a trademark of a cult, these secret manifestations.

When Jesus comes back, there will be no mistaking Him.

He will come in great pomp, and declare a bloody war on all those who rebelled against Him.

It will be a horrible thing to see this sight from earth.

Do not ever be lured by a secret manifestation of Jesus Christ.

Every eye will see Him when He returns...

Next, the Lord here speaks through John's pen after the praise and recognition...

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Now He is revealing His eternal nature, God declares He is the Alpha and the Omega.

That has the equivalent to us today as to saying "He is the A to Z."

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet.

God is the totality, the Beginning and the End.

Everything starts with God, and as John will reveal, it will all end with God.

In Revelation 21:6 Jesus will call Himself the same thing, showing us, He too is eternal, with the Father, The Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.

The Almighty.

And God here says Amen to this declaration...

So this morning we have this Greeting, with Love from the Almighty.

What wonderful truths we find in this Greeting...

Now, I want to close by talking to you, the person who is in the midst of great trials and anxiety.

You who are just overwhelmed with the pressures in this life.

You who are feeling the weight of the curse and sin in this world.

I do not care how pleasant and lighthearted we like to pretend this world is, the reality of this world, is it is harsh, cruel and unfair.

The evils that man is capable of committing are heart wrenching, and the atrocities abound.

Now perhaps you are living in a personal hell this morning, because of the realities of this cruel world.

Understand this, that this letter was penned to remind the believer that one day things will be different.

One day things will be made right, and that is a hope, our God is not dead, He is alive and He is coming back.

In the meantime, while we wait, John has given us some amazing truths to ponder here, there is in fact, good that can be found in the midst of all the uncertainty.

God's love for us, and the cleansing of our own guilt and sin.

When we bask in that love, the hope that stirs up inside us gives us peace in the midst of this life.

You know this life is full of death and corruption.

It is unavoidable, the effects touch us all.

Earlier this year, my wonderful God-fearing grandmother gave up her fight against Parkinson's disease, it wreaked havoc on her feeble body.

And death took her from us.

That loss hit me hard, that same week, our family dog, that was so faithful, who welcomed every baby we brought home through the doors, got a growth on his back leg, in a matter of days and after many visits to the vet, we had to put him to sleep, as the pain and swelling got unbearable for him.

In April we found out Jess was pregnant, and we were so excited, but on the day our Lola turned 3, Jessica lost the baby that was in her womb. And once again we were touched by death.

Jessica's father, who has been battling COPD for years, lost his fight, as his lungs finally stopped working as he was sleeping on June 2nd.

Now, no matter what our Instagrams and Facebooks portray, this life is hard.

This life is tough, and full of heartbreak, I know firsthand.

Mercy Me came out with a song in Feb. of this year, that really became a prayer of mine.

Bart Millard writes...

I've stood on this stage night after night
Reminding the broken it'll be alright
But right now, oh right now I just can't
It's easy to sing
When there's nothing to bring me down
But what will I say

When I'm held to the flame
Like I am right now
I know You're able and I know You can
Save through the fire with Your mighty hand
But even if You don't
My hope is You alone
They say it only takes a little faith
To move a mountain
Well good thing
A little faith is all I have, right now
But God, when You choose
To leave mountains unmovable
Oh give me the strength to be able to sing
It is well with my soul

I know many of you are feeling the effects of this life.

I stand here week after week reminding the broken all will be right.

But I will tell you it is reminders from the scripture like this morning, that lift me above the realities of this life.

That help me to sing, "It is well with my soul."

Things will not always be this way! That is our hope.

Our Hope is in a risen King, who is coming.

And this King loves us so much, and although the realities of this life are difficult, He gives us a hope of a life to come.

Where, His love for us has bottled up every tear we have shed, and any tears we meet Him with as we come into His glory, He will wipe away with His own hands.

Listen, He loves you this morning, and soon and very soon will be with Him.

He loves us and freed us.

Present tense, He loves us, He loves you this morning.

He loves us and freed us.

Jess, when the tears are filling up her pillow at night, we find ourselves reflecting on His great love for us.

We remember that in His love for us, when we put our faith in His precious blood, that cleansed us of our filthy sins.

He gave us a new life, He freed us from the evils we were in bondage to.

It is such a healing time for us when we reflect on the power of His love.

That He saw two crazed drug addicts, with nothing to offer, He saw us at our worse, and in that pitiful state, He lifted us up, cleansed us, saved us, and changed us.

When Jess and I reflect on that, our hearts are lightened, and praise and thanksgiving come from our hearts and minds.

Be reminded this morning of His great love for you, and be refreshed in the knowledge of what is to come.

In the meantime, we hope, and we work, to bring as many people as we can to that future Kingdom with us.

Amen...

The Elders and Pastors will be available during this last song, please, I know many of you are hurting this morning, come up for prayer, and be refreshed for the week ahead of us.