

The Touch of the Savior's Hand

Text: Revelation 1.17–20

Theme: The victorious Savior brings us great comfort and courage to obey Him

Introduction – Give glory to God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ

- not usually our first thoughts in Advent, thinking of Jesus' birth
- we think of the resurrection at Easter, not Christmas
- but if it were not for Christmas, there'd be no Easter
- so we must take our look back, then look ahead and keep doing so

Because of the resurrection of Jesus...

- we must not allow anything to crowd our first love for God
- must love God first so that we can rise to love Him forever

Because of the resurrection of Jesus...

- we can face suffering, imprisonment, testing, and tribulation without fear
- we can be faithful unto death
- resurrection guarantees that though we suffer we will not be crushed
- though test, we will not fail
- though go thru tribulation, we will be preserved
- though we die, we will rise

Because of the resurrection...

- we do not worship idols & we do not engage in sexual immorality
- these are acts of the world and unbelievers who do not look to Christ
- resurrection guarantees that God will always give us what's best

Because Jesus is alive forevermore...

- we can be awakened from death and made alive
- His life is indestructible and has broken death's back

Because of the resurrection of Jesus...

- He can put an open door before us that no one can shut
- He can keep us from trials that come upon us
- He alone can call us to hold fast and ensure that no one seizes our crown

He is risen! He is risen indeed!

- therefore, lukewarmness cannot be tolerated
- in Christ's resurrection, we are offered gold that we might be rich
- garments to clothe our shame
- anointing for our eyes that we might see Him who lives forever

When Jesus speaks to His church—the seven churches in Asia—He speaks as the Living One

- yes, He died, but now lives forevermore
- even His words of correction or rebuke can be overcome if the church looks to Risen One
- John has seen this risen, glorified Jesus...and it nearly does him in
- he falls to the ground as though dead, not knowing if he'll be raised again

So, Jesus directs John's gaze, and ours, to Himself

- but even more, He touches John

- and He touches us through His Holy Spirit
- and oh, the comfort this brings

Let's come to know...

I. The Comforting Hand of our Savior, v. 17

- “When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead...”
- no Roman emperor could produce this effect upon John
- not even the audaciousness of Emperor Domitian, who had tried to put him to death
- no, only the glorified Christ could produce this effect

1. Captivated by Jesus

- have you ever been so captivated by Jesus that you've been willing to fall before Him?
- I don't care if it was “in your heart” or physically, even on your face before Jesus
- humility, repentance, surrender...all bring about this kind of bodily response
- John is leveled as he hears the voice, sees the majesty and glory
- there is no pride left, only humility
- there is no selfish desire that remains, only a turning from it to Jesus
- there is no self-will seeking to rest control, but a surrender to the risen Lord
- to fall at the feet of Jesus is to finally come to place where reputation doesn't matter
- to kneel at Jesus' feet, renders all other pursuits, no matter how good, frivolous
- John is captivated by Jesus...we ought be at the place where Jesus is all that matters

2. But he is not undone

- John had seen penetrating eyes like a fire gazing into his soul
- the pure white robes of Jesus must have made him feel impure, in need of cleansing
- John's own knowledge was made small in contrast to pure white-haired wisdom of Jesus
- oh, and that two-edged sharp sword of His word...piercing even to joint & marrow
- but look at the rest of v. 17: “But He laid His right hand on me”
- Jesus takes John at this lowest of moments and touches him
- He doesn't reach out to slay him, but to show Him divine power and majesty
- Jesus isn't there to crush John into the dust from which he was made
- no, He will make known why John should not be afraid

3. The comforting hand

- this is what Jesus always does when a person comes to place of seeing desperate situation
- made aware of sinfulness in light of pure holiness
- bowed low in humility and incredibly great need
- Jesus touches us and gives us new life
- until He touches us, we are spiritually dead, unable to reach out to touch Him
- He reaches out to touch spiritually dead little boys & girls to awaken them to His love
- He reaches out with His merciful hand and touches spiritually dead teenagers
- those who so often seem to live only for self...He instills a passion to forsake the world
- He gives them a heart soft, pliable, moldable into a passion for Jesus
- He comes to older men & women, who may have spent a lifetime in church yet not alive
- His right hand chases all fear away and makes the flush with unbridled joy in Jesus
- He must be the One, in grace & mercy, to make the first move
- there will be no talk of “free will” in heaven, as if there should be now
- no, it is only the perfect, complete, and sovereign will of God thru Christ that matters
- and this is the comforting truth John needs to be able to obey Christ's command in v. 19

4. So fear not

- do not be afraid of this book of Revelation
- yes, I know, some of it can seem scary: Christians martyred, evil on full display
- but Jesus doesn't want us to be afraid, and He didn't want John to be afraid either
- Jesus wants John to write down, not scary scenes, but what is meant to instill confidence
- hope comes from seeing and being touched by Jesus
- you and I will never need let the future grip us by fear...because of the resurrected Christ

Let's hear why fear should be drive away...it's because of

II. The Savior's Victory

- the words Jesus utters next do more than comfort; they do do that
- they tell us of the majestic and glorious victory of our Savior
- they tell us that He is also God of very God
- confident faith to endure, to obey, to live come from Jesus' victory

1. First and Last

- these words identify Jesus as God
- Isaiah 41.4
- Isaiah 44.6
- Isaiah 48.12
- all said of God, but also true of Jesus
- therefore, He is first: not only did He create all things, He gave you your very life
- and He will always be: which means your physical life comes to an end
- He will be right there, reaching out to touch you and care for you for all eternity
- what could possibly make you anxious, fearful, shrinking back when He is first and last

2 The living One

- this is what we've been hearing so far: He died, but lives again
- by the very power of God, Jesus came back from the dead
- He will never die again
- and all those who trust in Christ will never die again either
- He will raise them...you, the dead in Christ shall rise first...to everlasting glory with Jesus
- this means, right now, your sins are forgiven, if you've trusted Him
- His death and resurrection did that
- it paid the penalty you owed for your cosmic treason against the Almighty God
- but now, in Christ, you are more alive than any unbeliever will ever know

3. The keys

- by virtue of His victory over death, Jesus holds the keys
- this means He is in control of who gets locked up and who gets liberated
- Jesus, in pure holiness, is terrifying to a sinner, still dead in trespasses and sins
- but He died to pay the penalty for sin, by virtue of His resurrection, He now holds the keys
- Death & Hades are in His control
- imagine this for John: in exile, possibly in chains at times, knowing Jesus holds greater keys
- when Jesus says, "Fear not" John will not fear
- the state of being dead...physically and spiritually to God is done; Jesus did that on the cross
- the place of Hades, the realm of the dead unbeliever awaiting
- awaiting what? Jesus' second coming...in judgment for them

- what an awful place, but Jesus holds the keys and is in sovereign control
- don't fear, though, if you are in Christ: Jesus is the Victor!
- imagine the seven churches receiving these words
- some had loved ones taken from them, thrown to lions, beheaded with sword
- many may have wondered if they'd be next, holding the name of Jesus dear in heart
- then imagine the comfort and confidence when Jesus says, "I hold keys to Death & Hades"
- "I'm in charge of the place of death, and where you will go when you die. Fear not!"
- do you need to hear these words today?
- then hear them well and do not be afraid...no matter what is coming down your path now

Because He is the victorious Savior, we can obey with great delight in ...

III. The Savior's Authority

- now, when Jesus commands John to write, John will do so, no matter what he sees
- what he has seen...right here and now, in ch. 1: the majestic, glorified, risen & reigning Jesus
- what is...the things given to him to write to the churches, in ch. 2 & 3
- and what is to take place: not stuff just relegated to the future & not pertinent to them or us
- no, this is what is coming in ch 4-22
- John will write, boldly, confidently, and yes, still with some trepidation
- but he will do obediently, so the churches will know this same unveiling of Jesus

1. Seven stars

- as for the mystery of the seven stars...
- the mystery is no more, for Jesus reveals they are angelic beings
- I've mentioned these angels a couple times already, so I won't spend much more time
- they are angels who represent each of the churches they are charged with
- could be like guardian angels for each church
- could be like messengers, on call by the Father, to go and work on behalf of the churches
- but what's more important than identity here is location
- there are in Jesus' right hand: this means He is in charge of each church

2. Seven lampstands

- and the lampstands tell us that He is present with His church
- there He is...do you see Him? In the midst of His children, His brothers & sisters
- now, because the majestic, glorified, resurrected Jesus is there, we can hear & obey
- we can now begin to see ourselves as partners with Jesus in tribulation & suffering
- this will most likely mean some rearranging and readjustments in our thinking
- our expectations of the Christian life as one of all good blessings will change
- we'll realize that Jesus, who overcame death, sin, the devil and even hell itself, protects us
- there is no earthly hard that can befall us that God doesn't design for our good
- we'll come to see that God doesn't always give us what we want when we pray
- but what He gives us is because Jesus is alive forevermore & we will live with him forever
- because Jesus is in the midst of us, the people known as Albion Free Church, we can live
- we can hear and obey His words to us in His Bible
- we'll know what it means to persevere even when we're misunderstood, criticized, disregarded
- or, even if worse comes our way, we will never be alone, for Jesus is right there with us
- keeping these words is going to mean instead of resenting the tribulation coming our way...
- we will accept it because we're citizens of God's kingdom
- we will expect it, we will even rejoice in it for it further identifies us with Christ
- we will find that seeing the glorified and ascended Jesus is what we need

- so, see Him in His eternal authoritative, powerful, triumphant, compassionate reality
- and remain committed to Him until He calls you home or He comes again

Conclusion – our world loves to reduce everything so it can be taken quickly, easily

- blog posts usually have about 800 words
- tweets on Twitter are limited to 280 characters, only 40-50 words
- Instagram and Snapchat are mostly just pictures because no one has time to read anything
- how different is this Jesus as He is revealed here before us
- instead of reducing Jesus to simplified, understandable, manageable terms...
- the vision that John was given and wrote down for us expands our vision
- it engages our imagination and stirs our faith to greater confidence
- it makes us open up ourselves to Someone bigger and grander and more captivating than ever
- then, when He commands us, we come willingly to obey Him
- we find ourselves, even as we started in v. 1–3: blessed
- blessed by seeing the glorified Jesus