

Revelation 1: 4-6; “To Him Who Loved Us”, Sermon # 3 in the series - “The Faithful and True Witness”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on November 27th, 2005, and again on November 7th, 2010 in the Afternoon Worship.

In the Afternoon Worship on the first Sunday of last month, I attempted to open up to you the first two of these amazing descriptions of our glorious Triune God that are given to us here in verse 4. You will find that if you would understand prophecy and especially the Book of the Revelation, that you must get used to the idea that when John is describing the reality of spiritual things he uses many phrases which we cannot understand without comparing them with how they are used in other parts of the Bible. To understand the prophecy of this book means that you will attempt to interpret it by taking the phrases you find here and reference them to those which are identical or similar in other books of the Bible. It is a good and safe way of interpretation to do this and to study to understand the mysteries which are set forth for us here in this book. The things set forth in this book are literal spiritual realities, and yet metaphors or word pictures or symbols are used which have a more common literal physical use or meaning. We will see this all the way through this book. John wrote in a way that conceals the truth from enemies of the church while it reveals the truth of what the church will undergo in this age. That is, these word pictures and metaphors and symbols are meant to convey to our minds a spiritual reality or event or series of events which describe the opposition to the advance of Christ’s kingdom on the earth and show how the church will overcome it by Christ’s grace and power. It will take prayer and a skillful opening up of these words and phrases to be able to rightly understand and apply these descriptions of God, of Christ, of the Church, and of the oppositions to the Church’s advancing the gospel to all the nations. But we will attempt to correctly apply the words as best we can to obtain a correct Biblical and Historical sense.

We saw, the last time that I preached to you, that the Father is described for us as eternally present. He is the One “who is and who was and who is to come.” He is not literally coming as Christ will some day, but His unchangeable being and purposes will come about and come to fruition. It was His plan and His eternal purpose to create all things in and for and through His Son. And realizing that man would fall into sin, being left to his own strength and thoughts, He and the Son purposed together the plan of redemption. This plan would be unchangeable in its development and outworking. He knew what He intended to do in the creation, and who His people would be, and all that they would become through the Lord Jesus Christ in time and history. “I AM WHO I Am” is the name that was given to Moses who was being sent by God to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt. All His purposes and plans have been and are and will be fulfilled in perfect faithfulness.

We also saw this unusual description given to us, of the Holy Spirit, as the seven Spirits who are before His Throne”. John does not use the title of the Holy Spirit in reference to the 3rd person of the Trinity. He uses this phrase and sometimes refers to Him as “the Spirit”. We saw from Revelation 3: 1, 4: 5, and 5: 6 that that the seven Spirits are the seven horns and eyes of Jesus Christ, the Lamb in the midst of the throne. This means that the Lord Jesus Christ has all the power and all the discernment necessary to accomplish the defeat of His enemies and to accomplish His purpose through His church, which is weak and unable to do so without His grace and power actively at work in their lives. He is able to see into the hearts of His people, and work in the hearts and minds of His people, through the complete ministry of the Holy Spirit who has proceeded to every believer and every true church from the Father and the Son. We saw from the prophecy of Zechariah, chapters 3 and 4 that it takes the work of the Branch and the Stone of Israel Jesus Christ, upon which are 7 eyes; for His kingdom to advance, and for each church and its ministers to minister effectively. We saw that in the building of the church, God’s temple, that it will not be done by the human might or power, but by the Spirit’s work in the hearts of those who labor.

Now today we come to the description of our Lord Jesus Christ. After all, He is the One who is the main character of all of human history. He is the One who is the main character of this book and yet we see something quite extraordinary here right next to Him in verse 6. It is a description of us who believe in Him. “He has made us kings and priests to His God and Father.” And this placement of ourselves right next to Him is no accident. Because everything that Jesus Christ is and all that he is doing is described in relation to those whom He loved. His church is very dear to His heart. And so we will find that often in this book you will not only find the battles between the kingdoms of darkness and light, but you also find the love between Christ and His church being described. This is the beginning of that description. Jesus Christ is described for us here as the One who, because He has been faithful in life and has overcome death, is showing us His power to wash us and cleanse us from sin, and to make us kings and priests to His Father. It is evident that to Him belongs all the glory for anything that we do with our lives. Why should all the glory for what we become or do as Christians be ascribed and given to the Lord Jesus Christ? Well I think that there are 4 reasons why you and I should ascribe all the glory to the Lord Jesus for anything that we become or anything that we do as a Christian. I’ll try to be brief with each.

1st- Because Jesus has gone before us to faithfully witness to the truth.

I have pointed out to you in the first sermon that I believe that this is the theme of the book. Not only Jesus Christ as the faithful witness to Truth, but His church being a faithful witness to truth. All the glory goes to Jesus Christ for the church’s witness because Christ Jesus has gone before us to suffer for the sake of the truth. How can we speak the truth and convey it with power unless Christ’s Spirit be working in us to bring it forth? Jesus was the faithful witness before Pontius

Pilate. He said to Pilate in John 18: 37, “For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.” “Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice,” He says. Jesus made the faithful confession of the Truth before Pilate. Pilate would not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. So he says to Jesus, “What is truth?” The truth of our need of a Savior, as only Christ can be to us, is not apparent to any human mind by nature. The truth of God’s Holiness, His righteous wrath against sin and sinners and His justly holding that wrath upon sinners until the day of Judgment; this Jesus faithfully revealed. In John 3: 35, Jesus says, “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.” “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe in the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” He faithfully conveyed the truth that unless men would believe in Him, that they would perish in their sins. He faithfully stated to Peter that he could not suffer with Him at the cross, but that Peter’s salvation would have to be worked out by His suffering on Peter’s behalf. The truth that Jesus conveyed to all men was that He must suffer, He must die in order to accomplish our salvation. He succeeded in communicating the truth that He must shed His blood, that He alone could be a holy sacrifice for our sins. And in this He has gone before us. He was not only the Truth personified, but He also showed Peter and us that we cannot even witness to that truth without His power. This is what the whole book of Acts is about; “You are my witnesses,” He says. And yet they must wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes upon them. They must pray and look for God’s anointing to be His faithful witnesses. This is why the glory all belongs to Him for anything we do to witness to Him. The power and the results all come from Him.

2ndly- All the glory should be ascribed to our Lord Jesus for anything we do or become because He has gone before us to overcome death.

Jesus is called here, “the firstborn from the dead.” It is certain that we cannot avoid death or overcome it on our own. It was Adam’s sin in the Beginning which brought death to our whole race. “In Adam all die.” But the Lord Jesus never sinned, never had a motion of it in His heart or a wicked word upon His tongue. He was full of goodness and kindness toward men and He loved God with all His heart. When He was put to death at the hands of wicked men, death could not hold Him in the grave. The Father was well satisfied with the perfections of His life and work. He raised Him from the dead with power. In 1 Corinthians 15: 51 it says, “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” This is the reason that we must give Him the glory for anything that we become or anything that we do. It is His resurrection power that causes us to be able to labor for Him and for His kingdom in the way that we do. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15: 10, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” He gives the glory to God.

Jesus is the first in the resurrection with power, that we might be resurrected in our hearts from our death in trespasses and sins. And He is first in His resurrection with power in order that we also might rise from the dead at the last day, to be powerful, beautiful and radiant by His side!

Now, The 3rd reason that Jesus should have all the glory for what we do and everything that we become in our Christian life, is that He is the ruler over the kings of the earth.

There is no earthly kingdom that can prevail over His kingdom and thus over His people who may be suffering under the unrighteous rule of an earthly king or government. Psalm 2 says, “Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed, saying, ‘Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.’” “He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision.” “Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: Yet I have set My King (the Lord Jesus) on My holy hill of Zion. (His Church) Now the Father says to the Son, “Ask of Me, and I will give you the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You, Lord Jesus, “shall break them with a rod of iron; you shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.” The nations shall either serve the Lord Jesus or they shall be broken by Him. This is why all the glory should go to the Lord Jesus for all that we do. He is the ruler of the kings of the earth. We bear witness before them, but they shall give an account to Him for how they deal with us. That is why it says, “ Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way.” Never fear; you who are His saints. He is clearing the road before you of all the authorities who will not serve Him, but serve themselves and their sin. You are on the King’s highway. It is the road to victory and to glory and the triumph of Christ’s kingdom. Through Him we shall do valiantly! But He must have all the glory.

The 4th reason why Jesus should have all the glory for what we do and what we become is because He loved us enough to wash us from our sins in His blood.

These words are stated for us in this text in the form of a doxology. I picture it as a toast. Let us lift up the cup of salvation and together say, “To Him Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” What a picture this presents to ones who know the reality of this. The Lord washes His people from their sins because He loves them. John Gill says, “They were not first washed and then loved, but first loved and then washed.” It is indeed an amazing picture. The Lord Jesus seeing us wallowing in our sin; opening Himself up to the spikes through His wrists and ankles, and a spear in His side, the blood coming down to form a pool and then after His victory there, as it were, to take the blood that He suffered to shed and Himself washing away our sins with it. Only the blood of Christ can

wash sins away. The Hymn says, “What can wash away my sins?” “Nothing but the blood of Jesus.” “What can make me whole again?” “Nothing but the blood of Jesus.” “Oh, precious is the flow that makes me white as snow.” “No other fount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus.” If we are washed from our sins, it is because Jesus has done it. And all the glory for whatever we will do or become for God and for the advancement of Christ’s kingdom is because of this. All of our good works proceed from a heart which has been cleansed by Christ; from His applying His blood to our sin-stained souls. If Jesus has washed you from your sins in His blood, will you not be those who are continually turning away from sin, and inclining your heart to do righteousness? Will you not be those who will “walk in the light as He is in the light?” Will you not be those who through confession of your sins to Him, find the reality of His blood cleansing you from all unrighteousness? (1 John 1: 7 and 9) Remember how much the Lord Jesus has loved you. “Not with the blood of bulls and goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” (Hebrews 9: 12) And verse 14 says that “Christ through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, in order to cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” Certainly this is what we need in order to truly serve God; a conscience cleansed by Christ’s blood. Do you know the reality of this dear friend? Next time that I preach to you from this book we will speak about Jesus making every believer a king.