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Well, just a few words to sort of sanctify our minds before we head out for the picnic and enjoy that time together this evening. I wanted to just kind of re-emphasize this theme of heaven and the joy that awaits us and the glory and the goal of our salvation has nothing to do with this life. This life is a mere preliminary chapter, kind of a little bit of a prologue to the great eternal realities that await us in heaven and we are supposed to draw great comfort and joy and strength from that reality.

Turn to 1 Peter 1 and we'll come to one of my favorite passages in Scripture as we just prepare our hearts for enjoying time and fellowship and food together here this evening. 1 Peter 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls." Skip down to verse 13, "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

What kind of day is this for Truth Community Church? Well, today is a day of rejoicing and it has nothing to do with our new worship center. Every day is a day of rejoicing for Christians because we live life anchored in the hope that there is a coming revelation of Jesus Christ which we will participate in, at which we will belong, and we will see glory unspeakable. Wonderous, marvelous, Shekinah glory of our Lord manifested and the things of this world will pass and we will enter into a state of glory that is beyond all of our comprehension and that is the present possession of every one of you that know the Lord Jesus Christ here this evening. So while we're delighted to be in this beautiful new facility and looking forward to many years of ministry together and fellowship together, that is secondary to the fact that we have a true and living Savior who has set his affection upon us.

As the passage in 1 Peter says, look at verse 3 with me and we always need to bring our minds back here. You know, you're just like I am. You get distracted and things happen in life or things happen in the news and we get off-center and then we start to get a little bit discouraged and our thoughts start to multiply within us. We get anxious and we get wrapped up in the things of this world. We've got to go back again and again to remind ourselves that now that we've been redeemed by the blood of Christ, now that we belong to the living God, we remember that we are the objects, we are on the receiving end of great mercy that will never be taken away from us. Verse 4 says that we have an inheritance that belongs to us which is imperishable and undefiled. It will not fade away. It is reserved in heaven for you. So tonight as we gather together and enjoy an earthly time of fellowship together, this is just a little foretaste of heaven. The greater gift, the greater certainty, the greater reality, the thing for which we were created, the thing for which God saved us, is all ahead. The best is yet to come. Our best life is still yet to come.

We have an inheritance in heaven that is just waiting for us and even though we have trials now, we know that the sorrows, some of which are significant, I understand that, the trials that wear at you day after day and it seems like it's never going to end and there is no immediate hope of relief and tomorrow is going to be like today was, even the prospect of death laying on our deathbeds. Beloved, what I want to encourage you with tonight is always come back to this ever flowing fountain of encouragement that we are always able to drink from. That all of these things are going to be swallowed up in a supernatural victory that God has reserved for us as Christians. And it's not just going to be some kind of, you know, celebration like you're in the ballroom of a five-star hotel. It's going to be much more personal than that. It's going to be much sweeter than that. It's going to be much more intimate than that because Scripture promises us repeatedly that we, in that moment, are going to see our Savior face to face.

Look over at the book of Job, if you would, Job 19. This very well may be, I mean it this time, this is my favorite theme in Scripture because this is the culmination, this is that for which we have been saved. This is our destiny. This is the outcome of it all revealed to us in advance with enough information and enough of a picture of it for us too long for it and anticipate it and to be encouraged by it and yet enough reserved in the counsel of God for us to anticipate it with a much greater sense of joy and eagerness than a child on Christmas knowing that something great is in what's wrapped up there and I can't wait to get into it and see what it is like. Even Job, whose experiences were probably historically the first experiences of the Bible even though the book itself was written later, Job said back in Job 19:25, he said, "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another."

You know, I cannot get over this reality. If it weren't for the need to progress through Scripture, I would be perfectly content to preach on this theme week after week after week. Sooner or later if you preach the same thing, you empty out a congregation so you

can't do that, but this is the joy that fills my heart repeatedly. The unspeakable reality that the one for whom we live today, the one who suffered on Calvary for us by name, who loved us and gave himself up for us, the one who was preexistence before time began, he was with the Father and the Holy Spirit in heaven, the one who was dead and buried and somehow was resurrected, the one who can walk through walls, the one who ascended up into heaven and now intercedes for his saints, that one, that one is the one whose face you and I are going to see. We are going to see the face of Incarnate God. One who loved us enough to lay his life down for us. One who designed his earthly career for our sakes. One who came to seek and to save sinners like you and me. Beloved, I promise you based on the authority and the clarity of God's word that whatever is happening in your life and whatever pitfalls may lay ahead for us individually, corporately as a church, who knows, whatever it is, the outcome of these things, we are going to understand that not only was it worth it all, it was a small pittance to go through, a small price to pay for the vision of the face of Christ face to face in all his glory. That's what's going to happen to each one of us. That's what we're going to see and I can't wait to see the face of my Savior face to face. I can't wait to fall at his feet and pour out in person the love and the appreciation and the devotion that all of us have in our hearts for such a wondrous Savior as him. It's going to be magnificent.

You know, I really have no idea how all of the mechanics of heaven are going to work out. I don't know how it's going to work for it to be so intimate for us to see him face to face when millions of people will be gathered around the throne. I have no idea how any of that works out and I'm not going to pretend to describe it to you. But somehow, you know, if the Lord loved us and gave himself up for us at Calvary by name individually, Galatians 2:20. I refer to that so often, "He loved me and gave himself up for me." Well, somehow that presence of Christ is going to be far more intimate to us then, far more direct, far more perfect than it is now. And when you think about it now, each one of us has our own individual walks with Christ. He is precious to each one of us now in our own lives. Well, how much more when the constraints of time and flesh are cast aside and we're in the internal presence of the eternal God and we are made perfect? How much greater is the glorification going to be? How much more intimate will it be? We're not going to go to heaven and find that somehow our access has been diminished by the fact that we're there with countless others. Somehow it's going to be infinitely better than it is now just to bow before him and pray. It's going to be face to face. Beloved, that changes life. That changes every aspect of trial, of temptation, and it even lets us put our greatest joys and successes into perspective, doesn't it? Because you realize that the best that life has to offer us now, as good as things could ever be, is not worthy to be compared to the glory that will be ours when we are face to face with Jesus.

Look over at 1 John 3, if you would. When we left California, we had a couple of people say, "What is your favorite verse?" I said 1 John 3:2 and unbeknownst to me they made these handmade crafted frames with that verse in them. It was very sweet and so we have these posted around our house in different places. 1 John 3:2, and you know, earlier I said, "I don't know what it's going to be like," and sometimes you're not used to teachers saying that. Well, I feel like I'm in good company. The Apostle John said the same thing. 1 John 3:2, he said, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet

what we will be." Do you know what he's saying? He says, "I don't know the fullness of what this is going to be like. It hasn't been shown to us." Even the inspired apostle said, "It hasn't yet appeared what the fullness of it is going to be. But," he says, "here is enough to thrill the soul of true believers." He said, "We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." There is going to be something about seeing Christ face to face that has an instantaneous transformative effect upon us that will turn us into somehow resembling him. Not in his deity, of course, but somehow we are going to be transformed into something connected with our old person but somehow new in a way that makes us like Christ and we're going to see him.

Oh beloved, oh, we're going to see him! We are going to see his face more clearly than you see my face right now and I know that his face is going to be a whole lot better to look at than mine. By the way, it goes the other way too. This is family time, right? I can't get over it. I can't get over it. I can't anticipate how wondrous that's going to be and if a tree falls on me tonight, that's okay. Do you know what? That's okay because it just accelerates seeing Christ. So we have no fear in life. We have no fear in death because we understand that the certain outcome is seeing him face to face and if it turns out that wondrously marvelous in the end, then you see why it puts all of our sorrows in this life into perspective.

Look over at Revelation 22:1-5. The closing chapter of the Bible points us in this direction also. "Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him." Verse 4, "they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever. Amen." Face to face with Christ, my Savior. That's the outcome for each one of us. What a glorious thing that is going to be. So that is why we really rejoice tonight and the food and the fellowship and the sweetness of the time that is just ahead of us in the next hour is just a little foretaste of the glory that awaits us all.

Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, we are so very grateful to know the Lord Jesus and we are so very grateful that you have appointed such a glorious fate and destiny for us as this to see him face to face. Father, we are overwhelmed with joy and with anticipation and the fulfillment when our faith becomes sight. Oh, we don't see you now. Oh, we long for our home in heaven and, Father, we trust you and believe you and express our confidence now that that moment when we see Christ, when the fullness of eternity is entered into our everlasting experience, that it will be far greater than anything that we could have ever thought or imagined. That it will go exceeding, abundantly beyond all that we could ask or think. So great is the love that you have stored up for us.

And Father, we express our confidence tonight in the midst of a life that has its shadows upon us. In the midst of those shadows, Father, we rise above them. We dispel the shadows with the confident assertion from the bottom of our hearts that we have believed in you and we trust your promise that whoever believes in you will not be disappointed. Father, we are all going to rejoice in the end, those of us who know Christ and, Father, I pray that the thought of this glory would draw those who do not know you in the room tonight, draw them to Christ. Oh Father, may they be overwhelmed with the thought, "I don't want to miss this. Lord Jesus, take me and save me too so that I would be a part of that everlasting chorus of praise that is given to the crucified and risen Lamb."

Father, thank you for this church. Thank you for this evening. Bless what still lies ahead. May we celebrate together the joy of the resurrection and the joy of precious relationships that you have given us here in this body. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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