

The Way Back Home *Revelation 21-22*

Introduction

- Popular sayings
 - “There’s no place like home”
 - “Home is where the heart is”
- I love our home in Ohio, but there’s something about crossing the bridge and seeing the sign, “Welcome to West Virginia: Wild and Wonderful” that reminds me of where I am from.
- Those of you who have served in the military know what it’s like to long for home.
 - The friends and memories you made in the military will last a life-time
 - But home is where your heart is
- So, can you imagine how Adam and Eve must have felt every time their minds reflected back on the Garden of Eden?
 - The Garden of Eden was perfect.
 - God made the Garden of Eden especially with Adam and Eve in mind.
 - All they had to do was stay away from one tree in the garden, but curiosity got the best of them.
 - Instead of listening to God, they chose to give into temptation and eat of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
 - That one decision changed everything
 - Innocence turned to Shame
 - Perfection turned to Destruction
 - Life turned to Death
 - If only there was a way back home.
 - **Romans 8:22-23 (ESV) captures this longing, “For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pain of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”**
- As you consider how Adam and Eve must have felt as they reflected on the loss of their home, think of how God felt.
 - Adam and Eve were God’s children.
 - He created them out of love.
 - But their decision to disobey God created a brokenness in their relationship.
 - Those of you who have grown children can probably relate.
 - There’s something about all the kids being home, just like it used to be.
 - Everything feels like it is in place.
 - God’s love would not allow for this separation to remain.
 - Instead of waiting for humanity to find a way back home, God took the initial step
 - **John 3:16 (ESV), “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”**

- There is a way back home
 - John 14:3 & 6 (ESV), “And if I go and prepare a place for you. I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am you may be also. I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
 - John expands on this place in the Revelation that was revealed to him through Jesus
 - Revelation 20
 - A place where every tear has been wiped away
 - Death no longer exists
 - No more mourning, crying, or pain
 - For the former things have passed away
 - Revelation 21(ESV)
 - (2) “through the middle of the street of the city; also on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”
 - The picture of the Garden of Eden is brought to focus
 - There is a way back home!
- Two Points
 - If there really is a way back home, have you found it?
 - If you have found it, are you living in the the present reality of it?

If there really is a way back home, have you found it?

- Getting lost in Athens County
 - Missed the turn to get back on Route 50 and was headed in the wrong direction
 - In order to get back, I followed directions that took be through some back roads
 - Little did I know, the directions that I was following were not exactly right!
 - Before long, I had taken so many different turns left and right that I could not find my way back
 - Cell service became spotty at best
 - Frustration turned to fear- “This is what they make horror movies out of!”
 - I kept getting hung up on this rode that said “Dead End”
 - I would retrace my steps as best as I could, but still end up at the “Dead End”
 - Running out of options, I looked at the directions on the map and found the road that connected to Route 50- the directions did not show the Dead End, however it did show a road that ran alongside of the Dead End that connected to Route 50
 - So I took a chance and took the alternate road
 - Before long, I began to see signs for Route 50
 - My fear turned to relief and joy
 - I was headed back home!

- Can I tell you, that all of us at some point have missed a turn to get home to God
 - We try to find short cuts to make our way back, but instead we find ourselves more lost than ever before
 - In fact, we've taken so many turns that we can't even find our way back
 - The Bible says that there is only one way back home, the way back home is through the cross.
- Our sin has created such a wedge between Us and God, that it is impossible for us to work our way back to God on our own.
 - Instead God has come to us through Jesus Christ
 - He has paid the debt of our sin through his death on the cross
 - His love shed through his blood on the cross filled the gap between our relationship with God.
- There is a way back home, but we have to come by way of the cross to get there.
 - **Revelation 21:6a**
 - "It is done!"- same words that Jesus said on the cross right before his death
 - The way of salvation has been paved, there is a way back home!
 - **Revelation 21:6b**
 - "Spring of the water of life" without payment
 - Samaritan Woman who kept trying to find her way through multiple relationships
 - **John 4:14 (ESV), "whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."**
 - Examples throughout the Bible that act as road signs pointing to the way back home
 - **Revelation 22:14 (ESV) affirms this, "Blessed are those who wash their robes so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates."**
- There is a way back home, have you found it?
 - Forget about trying to get back home by retracing your steps, you will only get more lost.
 - Take the way of the cross, the way, the truth, and the life, for no one gets to the Father any other way!

If you have found it, are you living in the present reality of it?

- Growing up, listening to the testimonies of "The Saints"
 - Future hope
 - Can't wait to get to heaven
 - I'm just passing through this world
- Can I encourage you to think not only of the future hope of the Kingdom of Heaven, but of the present reality of the Kingdom of Heaven?

- We can talk all about eternity and how things will be when Jesus returns, but I think we have only told them half the story.
- A younger generation is concerned about the present reality.
 - How can Jesus help me now?
 - How is Jesus relevant to my life today?
 - How can my life be improved in the present, or do I just have to wait until I die to experience the joy of salvation?
- **Revelation 21:7**
 - Conquerors
 - Adam and Eve- given dominion over all living things (Genesis 1:28)
 - Cain- “sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.” (Genesis 4:7)
 - Broken relationship means the destruction of sin and the dominion it has over us.
 - When Jesus was around, the disciples felt like they could conquer the world, but when Jesus talked about leaving- they were uncertain what they would do.
 - John 14:25 9 (ESV), “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”
 - Romans 8:26 (ESV) “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.
 - Romans 8:31 (ESV), “What then shall we say to things things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”
 - Romans 8:37 (ESV), “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”
 - Romans 8:39 (ESV), “nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 - I know that some of you are experiencing trials right now, but let’s not live as though we are in the depths of defeat
 - **Revelation 21:7**
 - Covenant language-language used since the Old Testament, fulfilled in Jesus Christ on the cross- “It is finished!”
 - We can trust in God’s promises not only for the future, but for our present reality.
 - **Revelation 22:10-11**
 - Don’t get pulled down by the ways of the world
 - Keep focused on the promise of God
 - You are more than a conquered in Christ!
 - God will see that His will is done in your life on earth, and that your future hope is secure in him.

- If you have found the way back home, live life in the present reality of all that God's Kingdom has to offer!

Conclusion

- Bloom Where You Are Planted
 - Review: seed, Tree, Fruit
 - God's got a place for you in his garden
 - We begin to bloom when accept what Jesus had done for us on the cross
 - And begin to live in the present reality of the Kingdom of Heaven
- There is a way back home
 - Have you found the way back home?
 - Are you living in the present reality of the Kingdom of Heaven