

- I. Separated Then Restored; Sunday, September 14, 2014
(Sunnyslope)

Psalm 19:14

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be
pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

- A. "Good morning, church!"
- B. It's a beautiful day today (perhaps slightly warmer than I would like personally, but who's complaining)
1. Yesterday was equally beautiful
 2. And you know how I all too often (far, far too often) use a story about flying as a metaphor for a sermon?
 3. Well, I'm going to do that again today because...
 4. ...yesterday was the annual Washington State Seaplane Pilot's BBQ, hosted on Long Lake
 5. [Walk through pictures of the event]
- C. There was a very special seaplane at the event yesterday; extremely special
1. And no, I'm not referring to my airplane
 2. Instead, I'm referring to this: a 1929 Hamilton seaplane
 3. [Flip through 3 pictures; end on dock]
 4. This seaplane is particularly special, not just because it's old and yet in remarkable operating condition
 5. Rather, it's because it was for a long time broken, split up in separate locations, and withering away...
 6. ...and then it was adopted, rebuilt, and restored

7. (See where I'm going with this as a metaphor?)
- D. This Hamilton seaplane, as I said, was originally built in 1929
1. It was constructed with the float assembly that you see in the pictures
 2. It flew mail delivery and some passenger service for several decades
 3. Back in the late 20s and early 30s, the roads around here weren't exactly the easiest things to use
 4. It was often a lot easier and cheaper to take small passenger ferries or use seaplanes to get to the smaller villages
- E. After some number of years of service here, the airplane was sold to an air transport company in Alaska
1. During it's decades of service, it had its float assembly removed for wheels
 2. And it got beat up pretty badly by the Alaskan winter weather
 3. It sat unused for a long time
 4. Many years later it wound up back in the Puget Sound area
 5. But its engine was unsafe to use, the gear assembly was shot, and it was unlikely the airplane would ever fly again
- F. Then comes along the granddaughter of one of the airplane's very first pilots (His name and signature actually appear in the aircraft's log books)
1. She and her family bought the airplane
 2. They conducted an extensive search for all its bits

3. They discovered the float assembly sitting outside behind a barn in a small air field in Alaska
 4. They rebuilt the engine, reattached the floats, and restored the seaplane back to its original 1929 condition
- G. In a lot of ways, I see this as a metaphor of what happens to us in our lives
1. We are, by virtue of being sinful humans, separated from God
 2. We are separated from living a life of perfect holiness
 3. We stumble, we feel alone, alienated from God
 4. And yet in the end, we are (because of our faith in Christ) restored to holiness
 5. We are restored to fellowship with God
 6. We're adopted into the family of God
 7. And our ultimate destination is Heaven
 8. Where we will literally be with God

II. Given all this, I thought it would be appropriate to talk a little bit about this ultimate destination for believers: Heaven

- A. What is heaven, what's there, and what isn't there?
- B. Let's start with what's not in heaven
 1. No death, pain, or mourning

Revelation 21:4

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

2. There's no injustice, there's no work for the weary, and there's no more trouble for those who are troubled

Job 3:17

There the wicked cease from turmoil, and there the weary are at rest.

3. No hunger, no thirst, and my personal favorite, no scorching heat

Revelation 7:16

Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them, nor any scorching heat.

C. Now let's look at what will be there

1. First, of course, is that heaven will be beautiful

Revelation 21:11

It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

2. Heaven will be eternal

John 10:28

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.

Revelation 22:5

There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

3. And heaven will be a place of great joy and satisfaction in God's presence

1 Thessalonians 4:17

After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

D. Now this is a brief description of heaven, our ultimate destination as Christian believers

1. Whatever struggles we face in this life, they will be removed

2. However broken we become, either in body or in mind or in spirit, we will be restored and brought into the presence of God

III. But we shouldn't end here, because that's only half the truth

- A. The whole truth is that it's not just individual Christians who will be restored in heaven...
- B. But also the whole of Creation, regardless of how broken it gets, will be restored
- C. There's a really strange and wonderful series of parallels between the first chapters of Genesis and the last chapters of Revelation that show us how the whole of Creation got broken, just like the Hamilton seaplane
 1. Humanity was separated from Eden
 2. And we fell into sin, and Creation suffered
 3. Yet we know from Scripture that the whole of Creation will be returned together, rebuilt, and restored
- D. Let's look at the parallels between early Genesis and late Revelation to see the patterns

1. Let's start with the creation of light

Genesis 1:3-4a

³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴God saw that the light was good.

2. Notice that God considered the creation of light to be good
3. This pattern continues day after day: God creating then considering the creation good
4. This happens up through the sixth day when God creates mankind

Genesis 1:31

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

5. We need to remember that the universe, the whole of Creation itself, is created good
 6. It wasn't created broken; it was created good
- E. But then in Genesis 3, paradise is lost
1. The good universe, Eden, is broken
 2. Mankind is cast out, separated from Eden
 3. And mankind is cursed
 4. Humanity cursed because of its disobedience
- F. And what follows is chapter after chapter, book after book, story after story of struggle in this broken and cursed world
- G. And yet despite all this, at the very end of the world (and at the very end of our Bibles), we can read of a new heaven and a new earth, heaven on earth, Eden restored

Revelation 22:1-3a

¹Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³No longer will there be any curse.

- H. Let's look at some interesting comparisons between the state of the universe before the fall and the state of the universe after the restoration
1. River flowing out of Eden (Gen. 2:10)
 2. River flowing from God's throne (Rev. 22:1)
 3. Tree of life in the midst of the garden (Gen. 2:9)
 4. Tree of life throughout the city (Rev. 22:2)
 5. God walking in the garden (Gen. 3:8)
 6. God dwelling with His people (Rev. 21:3)

- IV. Given all this then, what are the lessons we should take from this for our lives today, right now...
- A. ...being that we are past the fall and not yet at the time of restoration
 - B. ...being that we see all sorts of brokenness in our world, and if we're honest with ourselves, we see all sorts of brokenness in ourselves
 - C. What lessons should we take from Scripture's parallels between Genesis and Revelation?
 - 1. First, I believe we that we should remember always that whatever we're suffering from now, it is temporary
 - a) Our struggles, our suffering, our anguish is temporary
 - b) No matter how much problem these become for us now, they will eventually end
 - c) So we shouldn't let these things get to us
 - 2. Second, I believe that we should remember always that whatever the world is going through, it's temporary and will ultimate get fixed
 - a) The wars that break out
 - b) The brokenness in our society
 - c) The sin throughout the world
 - d) All these things will ultimately be resolved
 - e) The world will be rebuilt and restored
 - f) So we shouldn't let these things get to us
 - D. Knowing this - knowing that all the brokenness is temporary and will be fixed - means that as Christians, we can be filled with a peace about things that makes no sense

1. It's crazy; the secular world will look upon us and be confused as to why we are joyful and hopeful despite whatever happens to us and this present world
 2. It's because we see the beginning and the end, and we know what's coming
- E. How should we live our lives as we wait expectantly?
- F. I would like to leave you with what Paul wrote:

Philippians 4:4-7

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- G. Amen