

Saturday, December 20, 2014

The Rev. Michael Gehring, Co-Pastor of The Upper Room Presbyterian Church and National Director of International Graduate and Faculty Ministry for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

Scripture

Revelation 20:11-21:8

^{20:11}Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it; the earth and the heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and all were judged according to what they had done. ¹⁴Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; ¹⁵and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

^{21:1}Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

"See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away."

⁵And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. ⁷Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children. ⁸But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

Devotional

"Behold, I am making everything new," says the one seated on the throne. Reading these words in Revelation always make me pause in gratitude. I can think of so many areas in in my life

where I long for a fresh start. Relationships with loved ones lost to death. Words and deeds that have made others weep. A life of prayer that, at times, feels barren and without hope.

But God's new creation in Christ brings much hope. An elderly priest offers incense, and sees an angel. A barren woman gives birth to a prophet of God. Tear-filled eyes are wiped clean by the caring hands of God himself. Death dies. Mourning, crying, and pain meet their demise. Thirsty people drink free water from the spring of life.

Everyone gets a fresh start in Christ. I know I can use one.

Prayer

O God, open our eyes to see your hand at work in the splendor of creation and the beauty of human life. Help us to cherish the gifts that surround us, to share your blessings with our sisters and brothers, and to experience the joy of life in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord and Saviour, Amen.