

Weekend @Home Pt2

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[0 : 00] We're still in Revelation 21, ostensibly. You know, most of the preaching I do every week, we all do what you guys do, is you pick up a book of the Bible, preach through that passage, and then the next week do the next bit.

Expository preaching, that's my normal preaching. So this kind of preaching is unusual for me. But it's really good to do this, what I call doctrinal preaching, where you're taking a verse and going through the whole Bible.

It's a great thing to do from time to time. We're looking at chapter 22, sorry, 21, verse 2. And we're thinking about the people. Let me just read that verse 2, Revelation 21, verse 2, and then I'll pray.

I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, beautifully dressed for her husband.

Father God, I pray that you'd open the eyes of our hearts again, so that we'd see and get what this strange metaphor is all about. And I pray more than we just see it, I pray you'd embed it into our hearts, that this would be one of the most wonderful verses, the most exciting, exhilarating, hope-inducing things that we've ever read.

[1 : 11] Show us, we pray, Father. Amen. So what's the best moment in the wedding? You go to a wedding. You've been to weddings. Here we are, we're in a church building. So what's the best moment in a wedding? For me, I think it's the first bit, when the bride first turns up and walks down the aisle.

Because there you are, you're all chatting, aren't you? You're chatting away. And then the bloke at the front, whoever it is, says, right, everyone, shut up. The bride's here. Everyone stops. Everyone's craning around. And there's that moment where she appears at the back.

And it's someone you know, maybe. And you think, oh, look at her. Wow, look at the dress. That's amazing. Look at her. And the hair. And she's got this massive smile on her face. And that walk that's up there.

I mean, you could do this walk in a couple of seconds, couldn't you? But it's that kind of thing, isn't it? It's almost pigeon steps. You know, smiling at everyone. Really milking it in. It's the longest short walk of your life.

And it's because it's a great moment, isn't it? When she comes in. And everyone's got their cameras. It's a lovely moment. A lovely moment. What we're reading here in Revelation is that.

[2 : 15] It's the fulfillment of that. It's the moment when the bride comes and does that long walk. But here, what's striking about this, and this is the fulfillment of every one of those bridal walks, is that the bloke stood at the front watching her come.

It's God himself. And the bride who comes up the aisle, well, it's weird. It's us. It's the church. The bride is in heaven.

And heaven and earth are the barrier between them that is gone. And the bride walks from heaven down to earth to be on the new earth where she was always meant to be, with her husband, God himself.

That's the picture. So this is the best moment of the wedding, of the real wedding, that we've just read there, verse 2. Now, what does this mean that the bride is us?

Because it says there, I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. So in my head, I've got some sort of kind of Lord of the Rings type imagery of a city coming down with a kind of power thing coming underneath it.

[3 : 28] And it's like a rocket landing from being on the moon. But there's this big city doing it. Surely it says the city is the bride. But cities are not brides.

You don't marry buildings. Because throughout the whole of the Bible, the new Jerusalem, or Jerusalem, is the people. I mean, it is the buildings, but it's the people. If I said to you, I know Glasgow is a vibrant city.

It doesn't mean the buildings are going like that. It means that the people are vibrant. But I've said Glasgow is. Because you can talk about Glasgow as the buildings and the geography, but you can talk about Glasgow as the people of Glasgow.

And that's here. The Jerusalem is the people of Jerusalem. And we are marrying God. Throughout the Bible, you have this theme of God being a bridegroom, Jesus specifically being a bridegroom, and the people being married to him.

And it's a relationship. And that marriage itself is just a shadow or a picture. You're a walking, living preview, premiere, if you're married, of something that's really going to happen.

[4 : 38] You know you go to a film and you watch a preview. You know, you watch the short bit. It's always got the funniest bits. And you actually watch the film, and that was all the best bits of the film, isn't it? It's a disappointment, isn't it? But if you're married, you're just living the shadow.

You're just living the preview of the real thing, which is marriage with God. That's what it's all about. And so this is God's people, the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, down the aisle, to marry his husband.

And this bride is beautifully dressed. Beautifully dressed. Now, throughout the Bible, and particularly Revelation, the clothes you wear is not...

It's all metaphor, right? It's talking about your heart. So, for example, in chapter 3, when he's rebuking the Laodicean church, they're a wealthy, wealthy middle-class church.

And he describes them as spiritually naked. And it's not like they're walking around with no clothes on physically. He's talking about them... Do you not understand your life is unrighteous?

[5 : 46] Whereas later on, in chapter 19, he talks about the saints wearing fine linen. And it explicitly says, which stands for the righteous deeds of the saints.

The fine linen... It's not like their fine linen is a metaphor for the life they've lived, their righteous deeds. And here you have this bride dressed... Ladies, on your wedding day, the idea is you'll never look more gorgeous.

You'll never look more beautiful. And that's the church. Righteous. Never looking more beautiful. Never looking more glorious. And what's extraordinary about this image is if you trust in the Lord Jesus, you're looking at your you, your future you.

It's what we are like. Beautiful. Glorious. Totally righteous. Now, one bit we skipped over in verse 1 that I think is just worth coming back to now.

At the end of verse 1, it said, I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first half that passed away. And there was no longer any sea. Why is the sea missing? Does that mean we can't go swimming?

[7 : 04] There's no more dolphins and no more fish. You've got to go surfing or go on cruises or anything like that. Again, metaphor, metaphor, metaphor, metaphor. Why is the sea missing? What's that all about?

Two possible options. Both are credible. This is the new Genesis 1. In Genesis 1, God made the world. He made it deliberately dark and he made it deliberately all sea.

And day one, he goes, let there be light out of darkness. Day three, he pulls the land out of the sea. Like a rabbit out of a hat. And these are all metaphors for the gospel.

God is a God who shone into our hearts and put light into our hearts. Because we were in darkness and he brings out light. Or he's taking the land out of sea. And so there's this idea of sea being the old thing, the bad stuff.

The people of the old world and the land coming out just like light is coming out of darkness. So the idea of then being no sea in the new creation is he's not having to pull land out of sea because it's just all land.

[8 : 06] It doesn't mean that there's no water. It doesn't mean there's no sea. It's a metaphor for the idea that there's no one or nothing that is against God. There's no one or nothing that's in darkness. You know, later on he'll talk about there's no more sun.

You don't need because it's just day the whole time and God's glory is there. These are all metaphors for the idea of there's nothing anti-God. There's no sin. There's nothing that needs subduing or changing. It's all correct.

So it could mean that. That's what he means by no sea. The other option, which I prefer actually, day two of creation. God does this weird thing where it's all sea and he's just made the light.

And then he takes the sea and he makes a new sea barrier up there. And what happens on day two is the sky now exists. The sky didn't exist because there was no barrier.

There was no top barrier. There was the bottom, which is the sea. And now he pulls this water up here and you see. And now we've got a sky. And then day three he's going to pull land out. So you have these layers of a house.

[9 : 01] You've got sea and land and sky and then heaven where God is. And so what he's doing is creating barriers. He's forming. So that sea that gets put up there, it's not like rain or something weird that the old people.

It's a metaphor for a barrier between heaven and earth. So often when you get these images of God in the Bible where there's the occasional time where they have visions of God.

There's like a crystal sea. That's in Revelation, isn't it? There's the crystal sea. That often happens. Or what's that crystal sea under his feet? That's that top water barrier. That's the barrier between heaven and earth.

That's the no entry sign. If you know about the temple or the tabernacle, there was this big curtain between the Holy of Holies, which represented heaven, and the rest. That's that barrier, that temple curtain.

Now, it could be what he's saying here is when there's no longer any sea, it's like the door is open to the back of the church so that the bride can come in. It's the temple curtain being ripped down. It's such that the barrier between heaven and earth is now gone.

[10 : 01] And heaven is coming down to earth. So don't worry about the no longer any sea. I'm sure there is probably lots of water. It would be great fun. It's a metaphor. This is a picture of the doors are flung open and the bride can come in now.

God can come into the world. We'll do more on the wedding tomorrow. Three things I want to talk about as we range through the Bible, thinking about the people of God.

This bride, what the bride is like, what we all will be like. I'm going to talk about new bodies, resurrection bodies, new hearts, new how we change inwardly, and then how the whole of society is different.

So let's take out that first one, new bodies. Oh, how embarrassing. I didn't realize one of my selfies accidentally fell into the PowerPoint. There you go. There's Arnie in all his glory in the early days.

He's not like that now. The new creation, as I said, will not be perfection. It will be uncursed. In other words, the terrible effects of sin are gone.

[11 : 04] That bondage lifted, as we said earlier. So we won't be perfect in every way. No one thinks every attribute of humanity is somehow perfect. It's just that the effects of sin and the curse of sin is gone.

So, for example, I was chatting earlier to someone, and we were talking about, he was saying, I've just retired, and I've been thinking about a certain topic and studying it deeply for 25 years.

And I was saying to him, 25 years, you're just a baby. You've got tens of thousands of years to be thinking about that. You're just the beginning of thinking about what you're thinking about. And some people often have this idea, suddenly you arrive in heaven, new bodies, and suddenly I know everything.

You won't know everything. You're not omniscient. You're not God. You're still a finite, you're just a resurrected, finite human being. So you still have a mind. And what's brilliant about that is you can learn.

It's not like we can say, oh, I know everything. I can just sit down and I don't bother thinking about anything now because I know it all. We've got the rest of forever to learn, to think, to study. You can set yourself a plan of a PhD for 100 years to be thinking about something, to grow and think.

[12 : 12] And you'll be in a world where your mind is not corrupt or wrong. Your mind is seamless. So you'll be able to think clearly. You'll be filled with the Spirit. It will be a brilliant place to learn loads, progress, growth.

It's not kind of static perfection. Actually, it's a bit of a shame. It's just the sinlessness that the curse has got. Now, the same is true, of course, of our bodies.

Have a quick flip back in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 15. 1 Corinthians 15. In my Bible here, it's page 1157. 1 Corinthians 15. Brilliant passage about the resurrection body.

What will it be like? That's exactly the question they're asking. 1 Corinthians 15, page 1157. And I'm going to start from verse 35, where it says, the resurrection body in bold.

So verse 35. Some will ask, how are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come? How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps a wheat or something else.

[13 : 25] But God gives it a body as he's determined. And each of his own kind of seed, he gives his own body. So you take a seed, maybe you've planted a seed, sunflower seed, and you stick it in the ground. And it looks like that little round thing, but it dies.

It doesn't stay like a little round thing. It grows into a new body. It becomes a... And so it is with us. We have this body now, and we'll have a new body then. They're two different types of bodies. He goes on.

Verse 39. Not all flesh is the same. People have one kind of flesh. Animals have another. Birds have another. Fish have another. There are also heavenly bodies. And there are earthly bodies. And the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another.

The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another, the stars another. And each star differs from star and splendor. So, you know, the sun is brighter than the moon. It's brighter than a bunch of the stars. They all have their different levels of glory.

And God says, I'll have that one more glorious than that one. And they're all different. So it will be, verse 42, with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown, you know, there's your seed, is perishable.

[14 : 23] That's our body now. It's raised, the sunflower, imperishable. It's sown in dishonor, raised in glory. It's sown in weakness and raised in power. It's sown a natural body. It's raised a spiritual body.

We get confused by spiritual body. I think it's a ghost where you can put your hand through it. But remember, Jesus was raised. They touched him. Thomas, touch me. I'm physical. I'm real. But it's a different kind of body. Somehow the physics is different.

Do you remember Jesus was able to appear in locked rooms, didn't he? What's that all about? That's the body you have. Weird. But it's real. It's physical. He ate fish, didn't he? They interacted with him. He could touch him.

But it was a spiritual body rather than a natural body. There's something different about the body. Let's take those three things it says there in verses 42 and 43. I'm just going to meditate on these.

The first one is this. Perishable to imperishable. So the body that is sown is perishable when it's raised imperishable. It's because all of us are perishing. We're all...

[15 : 19] It's called aging. We're all dying. Slowly. Maybe you've got to the age where you feel more perished than when you were younger.

You just notice things. My eyesight is getting rubbish in the last six months. Everything is becoming more blurry. I just feel perishing. I used to be 20-20. Now things just seem more blurred.

Now I could go and... I could wear glasses or get lasered or whatever you do. But in truth, my eyes will never really be the same until I die. I'm on a downward slope. And so it is for all of us.

Backs and hair and skin and organs and joints or whatever it is. We're all perishing. And it's really easy, I think, to spend your life lamenting the loss of your youth. Do you do that? Because you'll never get it back the way it was.

But one day we will be imperishable. It's so brilliant being a Christian. You don't worry about... I mean, you know, if you lose a limb, okay, I'll get another one. You know, everything that perishes will be back in spades.

[16 : 20] What will it be like to have an imperishable body? A body that doesn't decay, actually. A body where you never lament the loss of your youth. No more deteriorating joints or senses or hearing or seeing.

Or minds that deteriorate. Forgetfulness. No more lamenting the loss of youth. I think that would be wonderful, just having a body that never decays.

Or take dishonor and glory. It's sown in dishonor. It's raised in glory. See, our bodies are dishonorable in one sense. Now, don't get me wrong. Bodies are amazing. When you do the biology and you work out the miles and miles of blood vessels you've got in you.

Bodies are brilliant. God is a total genius. They're amazing. How can anyone think this is an accident? But, and I'll move on from that. But we are, aren't we, all constantly bombarded with images of the perfect photoshopped person.

Even old people in adverts these days are beautiful, aren't they? Everywhere you look, your perfection is beamed at you. And so all of us have aspects of our bodies that we know we're very sensitive to how dishonorable and lack of glory we are.

[17 : 30] I went swimming this week for the first time in years. And I realised, after some time being in the swimming pool, that I was sucking my belly in. And I was doing it subconsciously.

I wasn't even realising. I was thinking, I realised, what am I doing? Because I'm vain, I guess. All of us have different things that we are acutely aware of.

And maybe it takes losing a few clothes to show that to you. You wouldn't think of it normally. I sometimes watch The Only Way Is Essex. Over my wife's shoulder, she loves it.

And when you watch those programmes, it's a reality TV programme about Essex, if you're not familiar. And what's really striking about it, they're all wanting to be photoshopped reality.

And there are some characters who are in their 30s and 40s, these are real people, who are so plastic surgery, teeth lasered. There's so much falseness about their hair and everything.

[18 : 29] They're desperately trying to be their 21-year-old self. They're still trying to be glorious. And it just doesn't work. It just looks fake. But one day we will not be dishonourable.

We won't have to fight the loss of our looks. Because one day we'll be raised in glory. See, when Jesus was transfigured on the mountain, he was this brilliant white.

It was like, wow! No one will ever need plastic surgery or whitened teeth or sucking their belly in the new heaven and earth.

We won't spend our years desperately trying to look 21 again. For year after decade after century after millennia, we will be glorious. We will feel glorious.

We will look glorious. I don't know if you're the sort of person who has genuinely big body issues of some kind or another. Maybe you're... I used to have massive acne problems when I was younger.

[19 : 29] But there's all sorts of different kinds of body image that people feel crippled by. I think my advice to you is, can you just hold on just for a few more decades? It's not long now.

It really isn't. And you'll know just glory. That's a really lovely thing, isn't it? And then thirdly, weakness to power.

It's the only weakness. It's raised in power. Now, again, just like we're not omniscient, we're not omnipotent. We don't have the power of God. We can't lift skyscrapers.

We don't have ultimate power. We're not totally strong. But we will have bodies that don't weaken. They're not weak. They're strong. They'll be vigorous and healthy, which is really encouraging to those of us who have sick bodies.

I've got two sister-in-laws who have cerebral palsy. And one of the things I'm really, really looking forward to in the new heaven and earth is seeing them run and jump and dance and do moonwalking and cartwheels and talk and debate because they can't speak like I can, like adults can.

[20 : 38] And their faith is real. And they will be clothed with new bodies. And everyone will. They'll have this power about us. It'll be wonderful. That's the first one. Let's move on more quickly to the second one, which is actually more important.

We'll have new hearts. Go back to Revelation right near the end. It's Revelation 21. I don't have time to do this in depth. It's brilliant.

But from verse 9 onwards of chapter 21, it zooms back in on the city. Remember, the city is us.

And the city is bejeweled. You get all these jewels. I have no idea what they all are. But they look absolutely beautiful. And let me just read it. Where are we?

I mean, look at verse 19. The foundation of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. Jasper and sapphire and agate and emerald and onyx and ruby and chrysolite and beryl and topaz and turquoise and jacinth and amethyst.

[21 : 41] It's just beautiful. And the 12 gates were 12 pearls and each was made of a single pearl. And the great street of the city was of gold, as transparent as glass. Everything is gold, gold, gold, gold and bejeweled. You go from the Laodiceans who are spiritually naked to the saints who have died, who are dressed in fine linen, to the bride who is not just righteous in linen, but is glorious, beautiful.

And again, in all of those images, all of those pictures, those metaphors, they're really about their lives. The Laodiceans are being ungodly. The saints in their fine linen, the linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.

The glory is not just, I look pretty. That outward glory comes from a transformed heart. That's the big difference. That's why this city, that's why we are glorious.

Not because we've had a makeover, but we've had a heart transplant. In an uncursed world, there'll be no more temptation and no more sin. Just meditate about that.

Imagine never feeling the pressure of the flesh or a conscience-troubling moment for the rest of forever. Imagine never feeling that.

[22 : 55] Lust and hate and jealousy and laziness and short-temperedness and selfishness and pride. All those things that we struggle with, and we all have different ones that we struggle with more than others.

Which one is it for you? Imagine never feeling that. The guilt of, oh, I've done it again. Never having that pressure. All those idols that tempt us to love God more than, love them more than God.

You know, career or money or sex or marriage or family or leisure or comfort, whatever it is. What is the magnet that draws you away from God? Where you've had periods where you've not been to church or you've just not loved God because this other thing has become the big magnet in your life.

Those magnets are all gone. They've all been smashed to pieces. You will genuinely love the Lord your God with all of your heart. And I mean 100%. All of your soul, all of your mind and all of your strength.

In all of its, in its genuine totality. Imagine having a heart that always and only really loves what is good and really hates what is evil.

[24 : 04] All the time. I mean, I don't know how to illustrate this, but don't think about this too much. But imagine some sort of perversion, maybe some sort of sexual perversion that's so appalling to you that if I said to you, imagine that, which I've just done, you would think, oh, I wouldn't do that, but I've never even contemplated it.

It's so appalling. You will think that way about the most mundane, normal sins. Lying or swearing or... You'll be so appalled by the slightest unrighteousness and sin that you wouldn't even consider going a million miles to it.

Because our hearts will so be enamoured and so full of the Spirit and so loving what is good. Every mouth... Every word from our mouth, I beg your pardon. Every instinct in our deed, every desire, totally full of love.

Imagine always and only being driven by love. We have those fleeting moments, don't we? But always. Always filled with the Spirit such that we are always full of joy and peace and patience and kindness and love and self-control and all the fruits of the Spirit all the time.

Just that. The freedom of that. And then lastly, the new society. Well, if we're going to be people who only and always love each other more than we love ourselves all the time, imagine being in a culture when everyone is doing that.

[25 : 33] Imagine a random stranger you see on the street and you know that they have no negative intention towards you and they actually love you. I don't know. Maybe you'll be just hugging strangers.

You can't walk up the road without wanting to hug people because you love them. I'm being facetious, but everyone's intention is brilliant. I mean, imagine walking up Buchanan Street and you go into a shop and everyone is smiling and everyone is positive and everyone is for you and everyone is wanting your best.

I go to London, I think of the underground. I don't know what it's like here with buses or you've got the underground, haven't you? And you get on the underground and everyone's miserable. Everyone's in their own little zone. Everyone's slightly fractious with each other.

Just imagine the rush hour in the tube. Everyone loves being squashed up against each other because everyone's really kind and everyone's like, how are you? Who are you? Where are you from? Tell me about your life.

How's the last thousand years been? What will, I mean, let's go on the renewed idea. What will your local high street be like in the new heavens and the earth?

[26 : 36] What will your office be like? Just do that imagining. That's a really good thing. Imagine this uncursed. Imagine this with people who actually love each other.

How will it transform it? What will it be like? You trust everyone. No one is deceptive or harboring secret harmful thoughts against other people. Everyone is totally transparent.

There's no hypocrisy. Everyone is genuine. Everyone really wants the best for others. There'll be a joy and a radiance and a glory, literally, but heart glory from everyone.

Somehow, I don't know how this is possible, but in the countless throng, you'll be my, you'll be my sister, you'll be my brother. We'll be real family in a way that you actually are, brothers and sisters, with your actual family.

And, and of course, it'll be massive. If you're still in Revelation 21, I love the description in verse 15. The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls, measuring us, remember?

[27 : 36] The city was laid out like a square as long as it was wide. That's interesting. It's cuboid because it's high and wide because the only other thing in the Bible that's a cube is the Holy of Holies.

The Holy of Holies is the special place that God lived. But that's us. God, God lives in, we've, the Holy of Holies is not this random hidden room in the middle of the temple.

It's the whole world is the place where God lives. But look how big it is. He measured the city with a rod. Again, of course, this is all metaphor. These are metaphorical numbers. He found it to be 12,000 stadia in length and wide and high and the angel measured the wall using a measurement and it was 144 cubits thick.

And all these are 12. So 12 and 1,000. 12 is the people of God and 1,000 means big. So these are metaphors. These are not literal. But I had some fun with the maths anyway. A stadia is apparently 185 metres, so I'm told.

So I did some numbers and I worked it out because it was fun. The cubed area of 185 times 12,000 times 12,000 times 12,000 is 10,000 million kilometres cubed.

[28 : 37] That sounds big, doesn't it? The square area is just about 5 kilometres squared. If the UK is just under 250 kilometres squared, it's 20 times the size of the UK.

That's just the flat area. There's 20 times the size of the UK up as well. In other words, it's absolutely massive. Apparently, it's 260 Mount Everest.

There you go. Who cares? The point is, he's wanting to emphasise massive. There will be so many... Remember, this is not the place so much as the people.

This is a metaphor for the city, the people, us. There will be so many people. In Revelation 7, when it has this image of the current heaven, it says you cannot count the number of people.

You know when you go into some, maybe a nightclub or some places and they've got one of those guys that's got clickers and he's counting the number of people. The clicker, mate, his thumb is gone because you cannot count the number of people there will be in the new heavens and the new earth.

[29 : 36] It will go on and on and on. Maybe you've been before in a crowd of people. You've been to a big stadium event and there's just so many people just beyond you can't see. Imagine that, but more and more and more.

Yet, every one of those people are totally united in song, in love, for you and for each other. What would that be like? I was watching the football this week.

There was a big game at Liverpool. Liverpool beat Barcelona and the crowd were all singing, you'll never walk on. I've done it in Scottish, isn't it? It's Liverpool. Sorry, I don't know what I've done there.

Anyway, look, the point is they were all singing and it was electrifying watching it. The whole crowd all singing in one voice and it just made you think, what will it be like in the new heavens and the new earth when everyone is pumped and righteous and full of love and God is there.

Totally wonderful. But again, one of the problems and one of the songs we sung a minute ago kind of hinted at this is a lot of Christians have this view of heaven is actually it's just singing and on and on and on singing.

[30 : 43] It's just like a massive worship session that goes on for 20 billion years. And I think the singing will be outstanding. I mean, what will it be like to be in that with all those people?

And not just will it be singing with all these people full of love and you're transformed and there's all these people but God himself will be there. We were singing Behold Our God earlier, weren't we? But when we sing Behold Our God we kind of mean but you can't actually behold him because he's in heaven you can't actually see him.

We kind of mean that metaphorically. But when we sing Behold Our God we're going Behold Our God there he is, look! And we'll all be there. It will be electric. The songs that we'll be singing will just blow your mind.

It'll be wonderful. And yet it's not like that's all we do. It's not like we just sing and only sing. Could that I think that could get maybe, I don't know it could get boring I imagine.

No, maybe you can't. I don't want to say that. But the point is the way the Bible actually doesn't give that image of only and always singing. Singing is done at moments of great victory like when Moses brought them through the Red Sea they sang a great glory song.

[31 : 47] They didn't just stand there singing for the rest of the days they set up the new kingdom. And the kingdom of God is a place. It's a society. A normal functioning society on a new earth.

But an uncursed one. There's not many great images of this but let me show you one in the Bible from we'll skip the Ephesians verse we'll go on to the next slide.

which is from one king just before I read this this is the mountain peak of the Old Testament. This is when Solomon is the king and he's living for God at this stage of his life and everything is working right in the kingdom of God.

This is a shadow the best shadow there is in the Bible apart from maybe the early church even of what it will be like in the kingdom of God. So let me just read this. The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as sand on the seashore.

They ate they drank they were happy and Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon's subjects all his life.

[32 : 51] So there's this idea that it's massive the land is huge all the people are subjected to him so they're all now under God's rule. Solomon's daily provisions were 30 cores of the finest flour and 60 cores of meal 10 head of stall head fed cattle 20 of pasture fed cattle and 100 sheep and goats as well as deer gazelles, roebucks and chosfowl.

That's quite a menu every day. For he ruled over all the kingdoms west of the Euphrates River from Tipsa to Gaza and had peace on all sides. Look at that.

During Solomon's lifetime Judah and Israel from Dan to Beersheba that's from the top to the bottom lived in safety and everyone under their own vine and under their own fig tree. It's almost all the metaphors put into one isn't it? This is a picture of a society that works that is as uncursed as it could possibly be.

There's abundance there's peace there's God ruling everyone following him everyone under their own vine and fig tree but then they've all got jobs they've got carpenters and lawyers and teachers they all go to bed and get up in the morning this is normal life but life that is uncursed society which is uncursed.

This is important because we're not just going to spend the whole time singing we all have jobs we'll all be doing creative things we'll all be learning we'll all be hanging out with each other and going for a drink we'll all be having leisure with each other and going for holidays and we'll have governments and institutions and it's proper society but real society uncursed it's real life.

[34 : 22] Let's have some fun as we come to an end have a think will your job exist in the new heaven and earth? Right so you've got to think we're not thinking perfection we're thinking uncursed so anything to do with health or death gone anything to do with arguing or disputes or crime or wrongdoing or stealing gone put your hands up if your job is gone what do you do?

How does it go? Doctor yeah you're going to have to retrain what do you do? Doctor sorry you've got a lot you're going to have to learn something else vet oh the animals are going to be fine so you're going to have to retrain as well all those years oh dear and it might be that bunches of you who didn't put your hands up think well actually whole aspects I was talking to someone a moment ago who does HR and we were saying HR probably will exist you have to organise people you have to help people resource but you just haven't got to work out all the disputes and all the nastiness society as it was meant to be I want you to imagine that how wonderful it would be let me just finish very quickly I've gone slightly over time let's just have one last slide just to encourage you a little bit of application Romans 13 says this and do this here's our application understanding the present time the hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed the night is nearly over the day is almost here so let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light let us behave decently as in the daytime not in carousing and drunkenness and sexual immorality and debauchery not in dissension and jealousy rather clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ and do not think about how to gratify the desires of your flesh that's a picture of sunrise and that's the metaphor he's using the night is almost over the day is almost here there's that moment isn't there when you wake up in the morning particularly in the winter and it feels like it's two in the morning but it's actually time to get up because it's still dark you know that feeling and you find yourself opening the cupboard doors and looking for your clothes to put them on even though it's pitch black you've had a shower you've had your breakfast it's still dark but there's the beginning of the rays of the sun coming through you know there's just a little bit of it and of course you get your clothes out and you put on your pyjamas and you go off to work it's weird isn't it it's dark the sunrise is coming up you don't put on your pyjamas and go off to work you don't put on your night clothes you put on your day clothes even though the day isn't really here it's only just beginning you put on your day clothes because that's where you're going to and this is what he's saying when you meditate on what we will be like what society will be like dress like that not like that don't live like the old you what are you doing where are you going you're not going to work in your pyjamas you're going to work in your work clothes so dress like you will and in other words look to sum it up like this be now who you will be what will you be like in 20,000 years time what will your heart be like what will your intentions to everyone in this room be like what will you contributing in society when your heart is full of love and you're full of the spirit perfectly that's where you're going inexorably so put on the clothes of that live like that just like the Lord Jesus that's my application let's pray

Father we want to praise you and thank you for the eyes of our hearts just beginning to see just a little bit more of how wonderful the bride of God will be what we'll be like in our physical in our hearts and in our society and so therefore I really pray for all of us here please would you transform our lives now by that same spirit that we will be filled with all and forever that you'd help us to live as we will be to be who we will be for your glory and we pray this with such great joy thank you for your grace to us Father in him we pray Amen Amen