Jesus’ Word Makes All Things New

1. A new home
2. A new life

There are new cars and there are used cars. If you buy a new car and drive it home, when you get home, you are now the owner of a used car. Some dealers advertise new used cars. They call these cars new because though they have been used, they have been inspected and cleaned up so thoroughly that they are as good as new. The point is that the word new really means almost perfect or in mint condition.

New also carries the connotation of being better. You will hear the phrase new and improved. This year’s models have more features than last year’s models. Better safety features, better fuel efficiency and so on.

The apostle John in text for today describes for us what he saw and heard when Jesus Christ showed him what would take place. He saw into the future. He saw into heaven and he describes heaven with the pictures, visions and symbols that he saw. In the section of his description that we have before us today one thing is very clear. Jesus has spoken to us. JESUS’ WORD MAKES ALL THINGS NEW. New, as in new and improved. New, as in better than ever before. What Jesus has made new he gives to his people: a new home and a new life.

The first thing that John says will be new is the heavens and the earth. Our new home will be dramatically different than the current world we live in. But he does not specifically say why this new home will be better than the former one. But then he sees something extraordinary: I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. John saw Jerusalem, but a new Jerusalem, a different one from the Jerusalem he knew. The city he knew probably wouldn't be described as holy. That was the city that Jesus said killed the prophets and stoned those sent to it. Jerusalem was a city that was full of wicked, sinful people.

But John saw a new Jerusalem. This Jerusalem was holy and its inhabitants were holy, because it was coming down out of heaven from God. This Jerusalem was created by God, it was God's doing that made this a new city a holy city. God is the one who prepared this city as a bride adorned for her husband.

The city of Jerusalem is the people of God. The people of God rebelled against God. They sinned. They became, in the words of the prophet Isaiah, like a harlot, unfaithful to God. Jerusalem was like a woman no man would marry, but God did. Repeatedly in the Old Testament God describes his relationship with Israel, with Jerusalem, his people, as a husband and wife. In the New Testament the apostle Paul then says that this relationship should be the model for marriage. Listen to how he describes how Christ loved his bride: He gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless

By Jesus' blood - by his life, death, and resurrection - God made Jerusalem new and holy. God cleansed this bride by his blood and prepared this bride by dressing her in a robe of righteousness. John sees this bride ready to be presented to her groom. And now that they are married, he is ready to live with her. John writes: From the throne I heard a loud voice that said, Look! God is dwelling is with people. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. No longer is there wickedness, unfaithfulness that prevents God from dwelling eternally with his people. No
longer must men hide their faces from the just and holy God who punishes sin. Now they will live with him. Now they will have a perfect relationship.

What a glorious picture of heaven. What a glorious picture of the home that will be ours one day, when we will live with God - one day. Now we live in the first earth. Now we live in a world where sin exists, where sin remains a barrier between man and God. We live with the knowledge that each of us remains sinful, no matter how well we behave, no matter how nice we are, we all live with an inborn sinful nature. We sin, and our sins do deserve to separate us from God forever. Living with that reality is not very pleasant for any one of us.

But Jesus has spoken. Listen to verse 5: **The one who was seated on the throne said to me, Look, I am making everything new! He also said, Write, for these words are trustworthy and true.** Even though John is seeing the future - our future - even though he is describing what Jesus will do someday, Jesus shows his concern for us by telling John to write it down so that people like us can read it. Write it down because **these words are trustworthy and true.** Jesus knew that we would struggle as we wait, as we live in this world. Jesus knew that we have to fight against our sinful nature. So he reminds us that Word’s true. It is true, just as much now as it will be then.

That bride, dressed beautifully for her husband – that is us. Those washed with water in Baptism – that is us. Those who will be presented to Christ holy and blameless – that is us as well. Jesus' Word makes all things new. He has made us new, and we who have been made new, will live with him forever.

Not only did Jesus allow John to see into heaven, he allowed him to see some of the results of living in perfect communion with God. He allowed him to see life without sin and its consequences. He watched God as he comforted and consoled those who suffered for so long. He writes: **He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain, because the former things have passed away.** God will wipe away every tear by removing those things that cause them.

The Bible does not tell us much about what heaven is like. It does not give us a lot of specifics, the kind of things our curiosity would like to know. But we are told what is not there. No death, mourning, crying, or pain. In a sense, we can actually understand more about heaven by knowing what is not there than what is.

Even though we cannot really imagine what it would be like in a place without the things that cause tears, we know very well what life is like with them. We know the hurt that is caused by the death of a loved one. We have all cried and mourned. We know the pain of disease and injury. We do not even need to be wounded to be hurt. We can be hurt with just a word; we can hurt others with just a word. Tears, death, mourning, crying, pain are a regular part of our lives. And what a relief to hear of a time and place when all these will be no more.

He said to me: It is done. I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. To anyone who is thirsty, I will give freely from the spring of the water of life. To the one who is thirsty, Jesus promises the water of life. To the one who faces tears, death, mourning, crying, and pain, Jesus promises life. To the one who lives in the old order of things, he promises a new order, a new life.

**The one who was seated on the throne said to me, Look, I am making everything new! He also said, Write, for these words are trustworthy and true.** Jesus has spoken. Because his words are trustworthy and true, not only do they comfort us who live in **the valley of the shadow of death**, but these words change things. Jesus' Word makes all things new.

We will face death, but Jesus' Word makes our death and the death of all who die in faith the entrance to eternal life. We will face sadness and pain, but Jesus' Word strengthens us to face whatever hardship comes our way. We will face real pain and sorrow, but because Jesus'
Word is trustworthy and true, it is light and momentary.

Because Jesus has spoken, what we cannot see is just as certain as what is before our own eyes. Because Jesus has told us that service to our neighbor is greatness in the kingdom of heaven, we willingly serve. Because Jesus has told us that the smallest service to our neighbor will be praised in heaven, we gladly do the things rarely recognized here on earth. Why do these things? So people will pay attention and maybe say thanks to us? No, it is because Jesus' Word makes all things new. Because Jesus' promises are trustworthy and true, we live in the confidence that Jesus' words about the way things will be are as good as fulfilled.

Because Jesus' Word is trustworthy and true, we celebrate Jesus' resurrection this Easter season as though it were our resurrection. We celebrate his glory as though it were our glory. We do that because Jesus has spoken, that is what will be.

What glorious vision Jesus gave to the apostle John on the island of Patmos! What a sight to see into heaven! Jesus is making all things new! But my friends, Jesus has spoken to us as well. The words he speaks to us are trustworthy and true. He gives us a new home, where we will live with God forever. He gives us a new life, which is ours now. Because Jesus' Word is as true now as it was in the beginning and will be now and forever, we wait with joy as Jesus makes all things new. Amen.

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