



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

The Fifth Sunday of Easter – Revelation 21:1-6

Focus: *The resurrected Christ – Making All Things New*

word of life

“And 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.’ Then he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.’” Revelation 21:5-6a (NRSV)

Read Revelation 21:1-6

CHRIST IS RISEN! CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED!

The last book of the Bible, the Revelation to John, was written several years after Jesus’s resurrection. But as we have discovered in previous weeks’ reading of Revelation, the resurrected Christ’s victory over sin and death (the Lamb who was slain who has begun his reign) is the central, seminal act of God impacting all time, history and peoples. Christ’s resurrection is evidence that ultimately, God is in control, and life is the final word.

1. *What difference does it make to say, ultimately God is in control?*
2. *What does it mean to say that life is the final word?*

John’s vision in today’s reading is filled with hope. After all the tribulations and cosmic battles described in the previous chapters, John sees the culmination of history as something totally new: “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.” (Revelation 21:1 NRSV) All the suffering of this world will be no more; every tear will be wiped away. Death itself will be no more. (Revelation 21:4 NRSV) And even the sea – the symbol of chaos and the place where the forces of evil in Revelation are earlier cast – is no more. In this heavenly vision, all of the only-too-familiar trials and challenges of life are gone. Everything is not simply cleaned, restored or renovated; everything is new!

3. *Describe a time in your life when you received something precious and new.*
4. *What would it feel like to have everything new?*

All of this “newness” occurs because of God’s dwelling with humankind: “See, the home of God is among mortals. (God) will dwell with them as their God, and they will be (God’s) peoples, and God’s (very) self will be with them.” (Revelation 21:3 NRSV) The Greek word used for *home* and *dwell* is the word *tabernacle*. It brings to mind God’s saving presence with the people of Israel. The gospel of John also used this word to describe Christ as the Word who was made flesh and *lived among* us. (John 1:14 NRSV) The vision of a new heaven and a new earth is the articulation of being in the full presence of God, dwelling in a full relationship between God and God’s people.

5. *Reflect on a time when you felt the fullness of God’s presence.*

“See, I am making all things new,” the one sitting on the throne says in John’s vision. (Revelation 1:5 NRSV) Note the change in the verb tense – no longer future, but present tense: “I *am* making all things new.” The death and resurrection of Christ brings life and hope not just for the future; it also impacts the present as well. There are only two occurrences in Revelation where God speaks directly to John. (See Revelation 1:8 and Revelation 21:6.) In both instances, God says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega.” God – who was and is and is to come. God – the beginning and the end. “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true,” God says, to which we respond, “Amen!” (Revelation 21:5 NRSV)

6. *What does it mean for God to be the Alpha and the Omega?*

word among us

“Something old; something new. Something borrowed. Something blue.” This poem offers wardrobe advice for a bride as plans are made about what to wear for the wedding.

1. *Have you ever seen this advice being followed at a wedding? Give an example.*

In today’s reading, we hear the seer John describe God’s fulfillment of all of time and history when God’s will is fully done and God’s presence fully known. John describes this fulfillment as a new heaven and a new earth. God ushers in a new creation – a new Jerusalem “coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” (Revelation 21:2 NRSV) It is a holy city where all the suffering and trials of the present age are no more. There is nothing old, nothing borrowed, nothing blue; there is only the newness of a new creation – the indwelling of God in a full, complete relationship with God’s people: “See, the home of God is among mortals. [God] will dwell with them as their God; they will be [God’s] peoples, and [God] will be with them” (Revelation 21:3 NRSV)

2. *Do you relate to this imagery of bride and bridegroom? Explain.*
3. *What does this imagery say about the relationship between God and God’s peoples?*

This new creation is brought about by the one who says, “See, I am making all things new.” (Revelation 21:5 NRSV) God’s creative work is taking place now. While the vision is of a promised future for God’s people, God is even now making all things new. We await with joyful anticipation a time when God’s reign is complete and all suffering and death is no more. In the meantime, we are given hope, courage, and encouragement in our struggles.

Our language fails us as we try to articulate the promises of God in Christ. These promises are summed up in the words of God in Revelation: “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.” (Revelation 21:6 NRSV) All will be complete. We will know the fullness of life in the resurrected Christ. Life, not death; hope, not despair; salvation, not condemnation – all these are final words spoken by God.

4. *What does it mean to have God fully dwell with us?*

faith practice in daily life

Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2013. The theme for the celebration is: “Always Being Made New.” Although the theme is based on 2 Corinthians 5:17, the message is the same as in Revelation: “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Corinthians 5:17 NRSV) The good news of God in Christ changes lives and creates a new way of living. We live in the present life in a sure and certain hope that God is with us, and we anticipate the life to come when we will know the fullness of God. In word and deed, we proclaim this good news and embody the words from Revelation: “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” (Revelation 21:5b NRSV)

5. *What do you find trustworthy and true about these words?*

Prayer

Creator God, we give you thanks that you continually make all things new. Help us live faithfully and creatively, knowing that you dwell with us, and trusting in your promises of life and salvation. Amen

last word

Look for ways God is making all things new in your life.

Daily Faith Practices

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