

# A BETTER GIFT



## SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

EAST ABBOTSFORD CAMPUS

DECEMBER 1, 2019

### INFO AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Online giving is now available! Visit [northview.org](http://northview.org) and click "Give".
- Christmas Comedy Night: Laughing All The Way tickets are on sale now! Tickets can be purchased online at [northview.org/comedy-night](http://northview.org/comedy-night)
- The East Abbotsford Campus is hosting our 2nd annual Neighbourhood Christmas Party! **Sunday, December 15, 4:00-7:00pm**. There will be crafts for kids, snacks for all, a Christmas Light Tour (on our shuttle bus), and more! Invite your friends and neighbours!
- Sign up for Northview's Newsletter at [northview.org](http://northview.org) to keep up to date on all events, courses, and ministries.
- Northview is running many different courses this winter. Those include:  
**DivorceCare / DivorceCare 4 Kids:** 13wk seminar starting January 14  
More information and to register see: [northview.org/courses](http://northview.org/courses)

### LEADER NOTES

**Suggested Timing for a 2 hour meeting:**

**Connection:** 30 Minutes (visiting / snacks / announcements / ice breakers)

**Content:** 30 Minutes (Observation and Interpretation questions):

**Commission:** 10-15 minutes (Application questions)

**Care:** 15-30 minutes (Sharing and Prayer)

**Connection:** 15-30 minutes (visiting / snacks)

### LEADING SERMON-BASED

#### DISCUSSIONS:

- Read the scripture passage(s) together as a group.
- Direct people back to the text if they are going on rabbit trails or talking about opinions and speculation, by asking, "Where do you see that in the text? What answer does the text provide for that question?"
- As you transition to prayer time, pray through the issues and ideas that the text brought up.

### Observation

*This section is aimed at helping people observe the details of the text: what is written, what words or ideas are repeated and emphasized, the text's structure and how this text fits into the wider context of the book of Romans.*

1. Read Revelation 21:1-6.
2. How are the new heaven and the new earth described in this passage?
  - *No longer any sea (v.1)*
  - *The Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband (v.2)*
  - *God dwells with the people (v.3)*
  - *He will wipe every tear, there will be no more pain or suffering (v.4)*
  - *The old order of things has passed away (v.4)*
  - *The thirsty are given the water of life (v.6)*
3. What details of this future reality gives you the most hope? What details of this future reality do you find the most surprising?

*Various answers.*

# SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

EAST ABBOTSFORD CAMPUS

## Interpretation

This section is aimed at linking the current text to other texts or to the bigger biblical narrative. If you are running out of time, feel free to skip this section.

1. The idea of humanity “dwelling with God” is a significant biblical theme. Read the passages below to trace this theme from Genesis to Revelation. In each passage, try to answer the following questions:

Who is dwelling with God? What obstacle(s) are preventing people from dwelling with God? What does God need to do to restore the broken relationship? What else must God do to restore this relationship once and for all?

- a. Genesis 3:1-8, 22-24

*Adam and Eve are dwelling with God (v.8); Adam and Eve’s sin (rejecting God’s commands) forces God to expel them from the Garden of Eden as judgment for sin (vv.22-24); God needs a sacrifice to atone for their sin, but what if they sin again??*

- b. Exodus 6:6-7, 32:7-10

*God promises to rescue the Israelites from slavery so they could dwell with God (v.7); the people go after idols and God considers judging them for sin (vv.9-10); God needs a sacrifice to atone for their sin, and gives the Old Testament sacrificial system for this reason (Leviticus 16)... but the sacrifices of animals are never enough because people keep sinning*

- c. John 1:1-14

*Jesus (who is God) comes to dwell amongst people (v.14); people reject him and do not want to receive him (v.11); God needs to make people to be born again so they can receive Jesus (v.13); People need to be born again so they can battle against sin!*

2. The idea of God’s people dwelling with God is the ultimate hope of the story of the Bible. Read the passages below to see what they add to the picture of the New Heavens and Earth that we see in Revelation 21:

What is the nature of the hope that is described? Why do you think the author of these passages reminds us of the Christian hope?

- a. 2 Peter 3:8-13

*i. The nature of the hope: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years (v. 8); The Lord is*

*not slow in keeping his promise, he is patiently waiting, as he is not wanting anyone to perish (v.9); The day will come like a thief in the night (v.10); The heavens will disappear and the earth will be destroyed (vv.10,12); Everything done laid bare (v.10); Righteousness dwells (v.13).*

- ii. *The reminder is so the future hope will affect the way we live in the present (v.14).*

*Looking forward to this hope, we are spurred to holy living*

- b. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

*i. Future hope of the resurrection.*

- ii. *So we have hope in and do not grieve like the world (v.13) and that we will encourage each other (v.18).*

## Application

This section is aimed at helping people apply what we have read in the text to our lives. It is intended to foster more open-ended discussion as people connect the text to their everyday life, and reflect on how it changes the way they think and act.

1. What is the temporal orientation of the hope offered in these passages?
  - i.e. - is the hope primarily future or present?
    - a. What do most people hope for in life?
    - b. What is the difference between these hopes, and the biblical author’s offer of hope?
    - c. How does the promise of future and final restoration give you an enduring hope?

### Various Answers

2. In light of the two groups of passages we have looked at, what encouragement should we be giving to other Christians (1 Thessalonians 4:18)?
  - a. What kinds of things should we remind other Christians about in them midst of difficult circumstances?

### Various Answers

3. What can you change in your life or circumstances to help you focus on the better hope?

### Various Answers