

High Street

Fran & Lorie Interview: *What's the biggest diff you found between your years in Africa & now in Thailand?* Everyone loves a sort, share w/us a favorite story. [like hosting better: Lar or me?]

I. Slide1,2 Intro: High Street

- A. John continues his description of the Holy City, *New Jerusalem*, in this final chapter.
- B. Most big cities have a *Main Street*, aka *Front Street*, aka in U.K. *High Street*.
 1. John is going to describe for us *Heaven's* Main Street/High Street.
 2. Let's ask the Lord to increase our *imagination & wonder* tonight.
- C. **Pray:** give us Imagination & Wonder. See John's Vision. Hear Your voice. *Our question marks will be turned into exclamation marks.*
- D. During his *final vision*, John presents the *New Jerusalem* as *a restored Eden*, including the tree of life, the rivers that flowed from the garden, and the intimate relationship the first people enjoyed with God.
 1. Eden is a place where the **1st humans are placed** by Yahweh and from which they are *later expelled*.
 2. In Genesis 2-3 it is described as a place of **beauty and abundance**.
 3. Elsewhere it is designated as *The Lord's own garden* (Isa 51:3 ESV For the Lord comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like **Eden**, her desert like **the garden of the Lord**; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song)
 4. In Genesis 2–3 it is probably meant to be understood primarily as *a dwelling place of God* rather than simply a place of human habitation.

II. HIGH STREET (1-5)

- A. Slide3 **THE RIVER** (1)

- B. In biblical times & today **water** was so precious. W/o water **death** comes quickly for *plants, animals, & humans*.
- C. **Also**, *Moses, Ezekiel & Zechariah* all talked about this river (Gen.2:10, Ezek.47:1, Zech.14:8)
- D. Water is also used as a symbol for *spiritual life*.
1. Jn.7:38 *He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.*
 - a) *This River*, is *the Living water* Jesus was talking about here in John.
- E. **Slide4 THE TREE** (2)
- F. In Genesis 3:22,24 the access to the tree was **lost**; **here** it is **regained**.
1. Rev.2:7 fulfilled, *To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.*
 2. Ezek, **nailed this prophecy also**, *Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.* 47:12
- G. **The tree** – bears 12 crops of fruit, 1 fresh every month.
1. Jericho for example is an ancient oasis city, where travelers enjoy its fresh springs, its **many trees**, & **plentiful fruit**. [think *desert dwellers &* an *agrarian society*]
- H. **Healing? Heal what?** The leaves are used to *treat and soothe humanity*. (emotional not phys?)
1. **Healing/therapist/therapy** can also mean, **health, treatment, care**. (i.e. it will always be good/healthy for those who eat it. **Opp of don't eat from this tree**. A life-giving tree(like the river). **Symbolized all that is good & wholesome**)
 2. They somehow **enhance the quality of life** **not** that they **heal illness** (as there wont be any there).
- I. **Slide5 THE CURSE** (3a) *really curses*
- J. We've grown up watching **curses** lifted. We expect *a frog to revert to a handsome prince* or *Snow white to wake up from a long nap*.

1. When *a biblical curse* is lifted, it might not be as *Disney-esque*, but no less *Wonderful*.

K. The curse fell in Gen.3:14-19 (on *the man, woman, serpent*). No more curse here.

L. **Slide6 THE SERVICE** (3b)

M. **To Serve** - or *to render religious service*. Here it prob refers to *offering worship* as priests.

1. Ex.28:40,41 ESV *For Aaron's sons you shall make coats and sashes and caps. You shall make them for glory and beauty. 41 And you shall put them on Aaron your brother, and on his sons with him, and shall **anoint** them* (oil for dedicating) *and **ordain** them* (*lit. fill full*) *and **consecrate** them* (set apart), *that they may serve me as priests.*

N. Lev.8:23 ESV at Aaron's ordination service, *Moses took some of its blood (of a ram) and put it on the lobe of Aaron's **right ear** and on the **thumb of his right hand** and on the **big toe of his right foot**.* [blood on right: *ear, thumb, big toe*]

1. **These were set apart to God:** **Ear**/to hear God's voice. **Hand**/to do God's work. **Foot**/to walk in His ways.

2. **Personal assessment:** *How are you doing in all 3?*

a) **Are you listening?** *Really Listening?*

b) **Are you** (not were you) **involved in Gods work?** *What is that work exactly?*

c) **How is your walk with Jesus?** *Was it pleasing to Him today?*

O. **Slide7 THE FACE** (4a)

P. **They will see his face** - this previously resulted in *death*. (Exod 33:20 *You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live*). **Now**, it is described as *a life-giving blessing* for God's people.

Q. **So** in Genesis 3:23 man was **banished**, **here** he once again *has access to God*.

R. **Slide8 THE FOREHEAD** (4b)

S. **His name will be on their foreheads** - may allude to *the plate* on the high priest's forehead

1. Exod 28:36 *Holiness to the Lord*. [hmmm, if you wore *that*, would it change any thing you do throughout your day?]

T. Slide9 **THE NIGHT** (5)

U. Here we move from being *in the dark* to living eternally *in the light*.

V. Repetitive – maybe John gets repetitive, because even he was having a hard time believing what he was seeing.

1. Also prob why they keep emphasizing *these things are true*. (6)

III. Slide10 **THE TIME IS NEAR** (6-11)

A. Typical of apocalyptic literature, John emphasizes *the imminent nature* of the events described in the book and the need for perseverance.

1. Christians *need not* compromise their faith in Christ or fear retaliation; they need only to **endure** and **overcome**.

B. Slide11 **THE COMING** (7)

C. Behold I am coming quickly – *taxu*, *tachometer* (measures engine speed), so *speed* not length of time.

D. Slide12a **THE WORSHIP** (8,9)

E. Worship God - even *the beloved apostle* is prone to mistakes.

F. **Serve** God (3) **See** God (4) **Worship** God (9) **Wait, Is heaven going to be boring?**

G. Slide12b Isaac Asimov (atheist, a humanist, and a rationalist. **Wrote** or **edited** more than 500 books) wrote, *I don't believe in an afterlife, so I don't have to spend my whole life fearing hell, or fearing heaven even more. For whatever the tortures of hell, I think the boredom of heaven would be much worse.*

1. Be honest, many have feared the boredom of heaven. *Strumming harps & polishing gold streets.*
2. Wouldn't **golf** be boring if every time you get a hole-in-one? (kinda that idea)

3. We've succumbed to the slander of heaven. (which was in 13:6 *Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle/dwelling place, and those who dwell in heaven)*)

a) Ps.16:11 *In Your presence is **fullness** of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures **forevermore**.* [Boredom?] *Everything always fresh, new, clean, pure.*

b) Are we a little bit arrogant to think *human beings* came up with having fun?

c) Maybe the reason you have thought Heaven is going to be boring is that *your Christian life is boring?*

(1) **But** that's not God's fault, *that's your own.*

(2) God calls us to **follow Him** in **adventure**, which should put us *on life's edge*. [risk. step out. go against the flow]

4. Think about it...**God is infinite in creativity, goodness, beauty, & power.**

a) **He** is exciting & **Heaven** is exhilarating.

H. People who love God, crave His companionship.

1. To be **in His presence** will be *the very opposite of boredom*.

2. It's not **God** who is boring...*it's us*.

3. **The real question is...***How could **God** not be bored with **us**?*

I. **And what about Creativity in heaven?**

1. God loved watching Adam **name** the animals back in Genesis.

2. **And**, God's always been delighted in our creativity. (Just as we delight in our own children's creativity)

3. Will there be better Beethovens', better Rembrandts', better Raphaels', better Shooting stars?

4. Researchers suggest we only use only 10% of our brain power. What if there we used **100%**?

J. **And what about music, dancing, storytelling, art, entertainment, drama, & books** *they have always played a major role in human culture.* Maybe that will continue?

1. Ever sat in stunned silence after listening to **music** beautifully performed? (Irish Dancers one *Christmas eve Service*. **A style of music I had never listened to, I greatly enjoyed**)

2. The expression of *singing, making music, Sing to the Lord a new song* has always been *near to God's heart*.

- a) *Imagine a remote tribe* singing praises in a beautiful language you've never heard.
- b) *Imagine* heaven full of rich & varied harmonies & harmonics. *I believe in heaven God will unleash our creativity, not confine it.*

K. *"If you're not allowed to laugh in heaven, I don't want to go there."* Wasn't a quote by Mark Twain, *but* by Martin Luther.

1. Luke 6:21b,23a *Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh...Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven.*

L. *Slide13 THE SEAL* (10)

M. *Do not seal* – Revelation's words are *not* intended for a *future* undisclosed audience.

1. They are written to *comfort and encourage* God's people *in John's day and in all periods of history*. John's revelation is for *us now*.

N. *Slide14 THE CHARACTER* (11)

O. *No*, not encouraging them to *stay this way*, *but* it's an emphatic warning that when *the time of the end is near* the opportunity for *change* will be gone (i.e. it's too late).

1. Dan.12:9,10 *He replied, Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.*
2. Because *the time is short* & because people *do not change quickly*, people need to repent *NOW*. *Otherwise* they will be *fixed* in their sins & their *destinies*.
3. *And for the righteous...* practice righteousness by persevering and remaining faithful *in the face of persecution*. *Let him be holy still* describes being completely dedicated to God, belonging exclusively to Him.