

Week Beginning: 26th May 2019

Worship Series: #5 in series



living sharing growing



Theme Verse

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
the One who is and who was,
because you have taken your great power
and have begun to reign'

Revelation 11:17

Remember This Week

Spiritual myopia is caused by only thinking about right now. "What do I want now? How do I feel now? What is happening now? It distorts our vision, blurs our future, affects our judgement, and makes every step uncertain. Through the lens of faith and eternity, Jesus' resurrection corrects our vision giving us present clarity, future certainty, accurate decision-making and trust in each step. For true vision gives us confidence to see that whatever is happening now, will never thwart God's purposes or promise to those who belong to him.



**Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand.
You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.
Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.
My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.**

Psalms 73:23-26

O Lord God, in the midst of the world where we experience heartache and despair, we thank you that we can trust your faithful Word. For when what is happening before us causes us to doubt your goodness or turn inwards to our own strength to endure, your light breaks through showing us a bigger vision and a world that you are Lord over. So restore our sight and renew our faith to see things according to your true vision. By your Holy Spirit, help us to walk in trust knowing you are with us in every step we take. Bless us as together we grow in your grace. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.



1. *Share your highs and lows since you last met with one another.*
2. *Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *Have you ever watched a movie that has given you nightmares/really freaked you out? What was the movie and why did it cause that reaction?*
4. *In your own life, what has been a horror movie that you have experienced that you wished would end? What enabled you to see and trust a bigger picture?*

To be a human is to suffer from chronic near-sightedness. We can't see tomorrow. It is rare if we can truly see today clearly. And our memories play tricks with the past...we remember what we want to remember...or we just forget...so even the past is foggy. Does that mean life is just random chaos, filled with uncertainty or insecurity? Or is there some sure anchor for our lives and our souls? John shows us the great hope to which all creation is drawn. The Father who created all things for his pleasure will one day rule over all things in love. Neither past, present or future are determined by us, by the circumstances of our lives or the challenges or threats we face. All of life is played out in the hands of Jesus who holds past, present & future in the sure grip of his life won for us by his death & resurrection. Living in trust is possible when we rely on the one who has been faithful from eternity to eternity.

Read Revelation 11 & 14:1-5



5. *What is your initial impression in hearing these verses? What phrases/words/images stand out for you? Challenge you? Confuse you? Comfort you?*



Revelation 11:1–14 continues the interlude between the sixth trumpet (9:13–21) and the seventh trumpet (11:15–19), an interlude that began in Revelation 10. In 10:10–11, John is told to eat the book; in other words to enact the message. John is not a spectator but a participant in God's saving and judging activity which means that things are going to heat up and get uncomfortable. But before that happens, John is shown the bigger picture - the true reality from God's perfect vision.

6. *What is measured and what is left out? What is the significance of this (see Mark 11:15-17)?*
7. *From what you have learnt so far in the book of Revelation, who is the temple, what does this tell us about God and what hope does it give to us today?*
8. *What happens at the end of the task of the two witnesses prophesying and what is its significance?*
9. *What can we learn about the plan of God for the witnesses?*

The two witnesses are symbolic of the whole people of God. They have authority from God and their proclamation is for a limited time symbolized as one thousand two hundred and sixty days (= forty two months or 3.5 years). But notice that during the whole time the Church is witnessing and worshipping (letting its light shine as it is fueled by the Spirit [olive oil] - a spontaneous, constant, and automatic supply) and prophesying the truth of who God is, the whole time it is being subject to the beast's reign of terror (13:5-7), the Church is safe! She receives power and protection from God. The prophesying Church has been given authority to emulate Elijah (2 Kings 1:1-12).

The city is here called "Sodom and Egypt;" Sodom, because of its corruption and need to control, and Egypt, because of its persecution and the pressure it puts on people to conform their thinking/acting in a certain way...which leads to people being enslaved. It is identified as the city "where the Lord was crucified." How ironic that the hatred of the world against the cause of Christ reveals itself in a great party where people actually give gifts to each other in celebration of the deaths of these two witnesses who had been such a painful rebuke to their sinful practices. But God always has the last word.

10. *How does the world today celebrate when they see Christians fall/humiliated for their faith?*
11. *What effect does this have on Christians speaking out and witnessing to the truth?*

Instead of a narrative of the last judgment and the destruction of all evil and the triumph of the saints, the blowing of the seventh trumpet discloses heavenly worship, followed by a theophany, evidences of the presence of God as Saviour and Judge (11:15-19; see 8:5). This really is a surprise, for the announcement had been made in 10:6,7 that, with the blowing of the seventh trumpet, the End has arrived. But surprise! There is no terrible destruction, no terrible battle between God and Satan. There is no dramatic narration of end-time events. Instead the blowing of the seventh trumpet leads to worship! John Strelan, *Where heaven meets earth*, 185

12. *Why is this important and how does this help you in the midst of your struggles to live in trust? (Note the formulation in 11:17...the One who is and who was...it leaves out who is to come...what does that tell us about the life we have now?)*
13. *Worship corrects our vision so we can see clearly and trust that God is in control of the details ..How can daily worship be a reminder to walk in trust and what will that look like practically for you?*

- * Praise God for placing us within his temple where we are safe despite what happens in this world. Thank Jesus for being the faithful witness that reveals the true reality of the life we have in his presence. Ask the Holy Spirit to increase our trust so that we can live with hope in difficult times and witness to the life we have through Jesus' resurrection.
- * Pray for those who feel their lives are in a horror movie, that they might know the security of Christ's loving protection and presence and the victory he has won for them.
- * Pray for the Church that it may always be a witnessing and worshipping community that declares the Lordship of Christ who is present and ruling now.
- * Pray for the upcoming Mission Trip to Cambodia, that God would go before and prepare the ground for the team that people might come to know and trust in Christ Jesus.

Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:
Name, the Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does for you. Amen.

