

## Love Thirsts for God's Salvation

† Living together with God (vv.1-4)

† Everything new ~ trustworthy and true (vv.5,6)

In the name of Jesus, our heavenly Bridegroom, dearly redeemed believers:

It's quite a shock to see one police car after another park on your side of the street. To see officers gather a few doors down and enter the garage with their guns drawn. A quiet neighborhood struggles with questions as family members rush home and the worst is confirmed. A teenage son found a note after his father took his own life. Professional law enforcement is "not at liberty to talk," but the truck towing the family van with crimson stained windows speaks too loudly. Kids with questions, moms and dads with tears, husbands and wives shaking their heads... What do you do? What can you say?

These verses of Revelation 21 bring comfort and peace. And they bring to mind an old refrain. A search for "hold on through the night..." shows Maureen McGovern, *The Poseidon Adventure*, 1972. "There's got to be a morning after, if we can hold on through the night..." Empty hopes like deep space? God has living hope for us. Sin causes our distress, but God gives sure and certain hope of deliverance, His sweet release from all pain and anguish. In seasons of joy, through questions and tears, through doubt and depression, God loves each of us with an everlasting love. In Christ Jesus we find the answer that shines through the darkest days. Here we learn how **Love Thirsts for God's Salvation**. In Him we have living hope. No matter how dark the night, we can look forward to...

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*"Sing to the LORD, you saints of his; praise his holy name. For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning."* (Psalm 30:4f) How many times during the days of my own despondency, haven't those ancient words of the God-inspired Psalmist, King David, dried my eyes and lifted my spirits? When day after day and night after night found so few smiles here below, I was so blessed to hear God calling me heavenward in Christ Jesus. My parents, faithful pastors and teachers, taught me God's stern command: *"Thou shalt not kill."* But they also taught me that *"the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 6:23) Such experiences, sanctified by God's Word, helped me counsel collegiates tempted to end their own lives. Sometimes it's as if we're in a burning building, too high up to jump. We rush to the door and feel the handle, but the heat says, "Turn around." The sirens are calling to the window. Listen! Help is on the way. *"Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning."* God longs like a loving Bridegroom to bring us safely home.

Out of the loneliness of his exile on the prison island of Patmos, the Lord's Apostle John was called to lift up his eyes and look. *"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'"* (Revelation 21:1-4 NIV)

God's boundless love desires this. The price He paid to dress His bride so beautifully is beyond our ability to comprehend. No wedding shop could supply such a gown. No spa could soothe away the sadness of the one He wanted to take to Himself. Christ alone could remove the stains of crimson from her heart and life. This He did at the cost of His own shed blood. He laid down His life like a police

officer risking everything to rescue and secure. When Jesus died on the cross for us, He took on our ultimate enemies of sin, death and hell – and destroyed them. When God raised Jesus from the dead, He set up a neon sign in every neighborhood that says, “Hope lives!” And this life is eternal. Hold on through heartache here below, for Christ is coming. He’s coming soon to take His loved ones home.

God says in His holy Word: **“All of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ.”** (Galatians 3:27) In His beauty He is preparing us for the wedding supper of the Lamb.

*Let us suffer here with Jesus, To his image e'er conform;  
Heaven's glory soon will please us, Sunshine follow on the storm.  
Though we sow in tears of sorrow, We shall reap in heav'nly joy,  
And the fears that now annoy Shall be laughter on the morrow.  
Christ, I suffer here with thee; There, oh, share thy joy with me.* (CW 452:2)

For our honeymoon in the mountains **Living together with God**, He laid a bridge across these valleys of sin and sadness with the cross of His one and only Son. Resting all our confidence and hope on Him, He calls us to the other side where His nail-pierced hands will wipe every tear from our eyes. He promises a place where we can live together with God in matchless joy where **“there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”** **“The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.”** (Isaiah 35:10 NIV)

#### ‡ **Everything new ~ trustworthy and true (vv.5,6)**

**“He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ Then he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’”**

Everyone knows *The Poseidon Adventure* was make believe. That’s what troubles tender hearts when all our solutions seem to melt in the heat of real life problems. You reach out for help, but their words fail to soothe your aching heart. Where can we go but to our Creator who loves us with an everlasting love? To whom can we turn but to our Redeemer whose cross and empty tomb still shout the triumph of grace? Who else but our divine Counselor has **“words [that] are trustworthy and true”**? These He inspired in the pen of His holy writers and guaranteed with faithfulness that would not give up on us no matter how sinful and rebellious we became. God knows who we are. He loves us as if there were no one else to love. He sees us not with sores of sin and shame, but as the bride He made beautiful by His tender love and compassion. He sees us not in our old life of guilt and despair, but in the new life of faith that trusts in Christ alone. What no one else can do, God did and still does whenever He convinces another soul to trust in Him as Lord and Savior. **“Behold! I am making everything new!”**

God lives in the eternal present. Whatever He has promised is as good as done. His un-religion defies the “Do...and...Do” of earth’s religions. When God’s own Son shed His blood for us all, Jesus Christ declared, **“It is finished.”** (John 19:30) In stirring words still **“trustworthy and true,”** the Lord’s Christ proclaims, **“It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.”**

When you know God’s love, then your **Love Thirsts for God’s Salvation**. Eternal life cannot be bought. No medical technology could provide it even with co-pay. Christ alone shed His innocent blood willingly for all. Heartache and sadness signal our thirst. But travelers in this desert, God calls to the oasis of His loving kindness and tender mercy. Nothing can cap **“the spring of the water of life.”** It flows **“clear as crystal”** down the middle of Main Street in God’s holy city, **“the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.”** This is reality. This is God’s promise. This is our reason for hope and good cheer as we “hold on through the night.” God’s own hand will dry our tears. His amazing grace that brought us safe thus far, will surely lead us home. God speed the day! Amen.