

God Brings the Light

✠ **Glorious peace for God's people (vv.10-14)**

✠ **Glorious grace from the Lamb (vv.22,23)**

In the name of Jesus, our heavenly Bridegroom, dear bride of Christ:

Hold On Through the Night (S#1129), **God Brings the Light**. Two sermon themes on Revelation 21, but where is any mention of mother? Mother's Day has been celebrated in America on the second Sunday of May since Woodrow Wilson's presidential proclamation in 1914. Earlier, Great Britain had a Mothering Day when servants were allowed to go home with a special cake for their mothers. Funny isn't it? These details came from a Twin Cities jeweler. Forget the cake! Bring Mom some diamonds!

Did your mom make parties like diamonds? Or was she "the meanest mom in the world"?

While other kids ate candy for breakfast, we had to have cereal, eggs, and toast. No Pepsi or Twinkie in our lunch, just sandwiches. She made our dinner different from other kids' too. She had to know where we were at all times, as if we were convicts. She knew our friends and what we were doing with them. "Gone for an hour," meant "back in less." She broke all the Child Labor Laws by making us work – dishes, beds, cooking, cleaning, laundry and trash – all sorts of cruel jobs. Did she lie awake at night thinking of more things for us to do? She always insisted on us telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. By the time we were teenagers she could read our minds.

Then, life was really tough! Mother wouldn't let our friends' honk in the driveway. They had to come to the door so she could meet them. Everyone else was dating at 12 or 13; we had to wait until 16.

Because of our mother we missed out on lots of things other kids experienced. None of us ever got caught shoplifting, vandalizing people's property or arrested for any crime. It was all her fault. Now that we have left home we are all educated, honest adults. And we're doing our best to be mean parents just like Mom.¹

Some think what's wrong with the world today is not enough "mean" moms. Maybe so, but all the "mean" won't help unless **God Brings the Light** to moms, dads and kids of all ages. Picture this:

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While we earthlings think of gem stones for wearing, in John's Revelation of Jesus Christ, the Bride is pictured as a "*precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.*" Transfixed by the Holy Spirit in a heightened spiritual state, John says, "[An angel] carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God." This was "*the bride, the wife of the Lamb*" (21:9), transformed more beautifully than "mean Mom" to "Mother dear."

God's discipline on earth sometimes leaves us feeling as if everyone else gets candy while we have to crunch dried beans and wieners. Imagine how the Christians felt in John's day. During the late 90's of the first century A.D., Emperor Domitian persecuted Christians all over the Roman Empire. They could not hide what little they had. Not even their freedom or their lives were safe from the blood spattered sands of the arena or crucifixion along country roads. Everything their eyes saw, screamed, "Defeat!" Christianity must have looked almost dead. They were convicts under Roman law.

It's hard when we're children to see the love of Mom and Dad for not letting us do the same as everyone else. Living under our heavenly Father's will is difficult too. Grandparents can sometimes help with a kind comment here and there. But the dear Holy Spirit uses John's Word-videos of the Bride of Christ to lift downhearted Christians high above life's struggles. Walk down the sidewalk. Look at any street. Imagine all that pavement made out of sapphires and emeralds, topaz and amethyst. In heaven that's how God describes the foundations of this New Jerusalem, God's Holy City, the Bride of Christ.

¹ Adapted from Pastor's email. Author unknown.

Her Light-source is Jesus Christ Himself. The Church Triumphant shines with God's glory for all eternity. She looked so poor and helpless here on earth. The kids on the block ridiculed her for not jumping in bed with every perverted game they could imagine. God sometimes seemed downright mean. But now they realize mother-love is just a dim reflection of **Glorious peace for God's people** in Jesus.

Describing a bride in terms of a city needs your imagination to rise like John *in the Spirit*. It won't be the way it was. We won't be the way we were, the way we are now in earth's dark night of tears. This Bride of Christ is all believers in Jesus after the final triumph of Judgment Day, pictured like a Holy City, the New Jerusalem: ***"It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."***

Ancient cities had only a few gates, strongly fortified, so moms, dads and children could sleep at night, safe from surprise attack. But the New Jerusalem has no enemies because sin, death and hell along with all who chose the devil instead of Jesus have been plunged into ***"the fiery lake of burning sulfur, which is the second death."*** (21:8) Moms and dads who know their Savior, do all they can to keep their kids from living like ***"the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars."*** It takes a lot of work because that's how we all are by nature. But God wrote our names ***"in the Book of Life from the creation of the world."*** (17:8) He puts His Name on us in our Baptism and makes us part of that city with the Church-numbered walls of *twelve*, the true "Israel" of God, safe from enemies in all directions. *Twelve gates* mean full access to ***"the Lamb,"*** proclaimed by the *twelve* apostles as the Foundation of our faith and hope. **God Brings the Light of Glorious peace for God's people.** And many a "mean Mom" has been God's instrument of...

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"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." (Hebrews 12:11 NIV) That's what God has in mind with Bible-believing, God-fearing moms and dads who train their children in God's Word. They long for the eternal Day when they can be good and close to God forever. They follow God's Way to have their children there in bliss and glory. Church can be a chore for a while at least. Our sin is our complaint whether as little children or as God's children who still have some growing up to do. Parents can help their little ones learn to love God's house by speaking of worship as the joy that it is. For all who know the shame of their sin can love the joy of forgiveness in Jesus. Actions really do speak louder than words, but we ought to watch our words as well since we sometimes say things that can put a stumbling block in the way of worship for children. They feel the distance from God because of their sins. We need to do as Jesus' parents did and make it our custom, our habit, to be in God's house where we come close to Him in Word and sacraments. These are His means of grace for now, but...

In heaven you won't have to go to church. **God Brings the Light of Glorious grace from the Lamb** when the Bride of Christ will be so close that church and temple won't be needed anymore. Can you hear John's surprise about the Church Triumphant after Judgment Day? ***"I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp."*** For now we steady moms with wise sayings like, "The shortest distance between a problem and a solution is the distance between your knees and the floor." But in heaven there's no distance in the bright shining glory of God's presence. If you loved your mother for all her efforts here, think what ecstasy you will feel in the fullness of joy with God. Never will the lamp go out because ***"the Lamb is its lamp."*** In that city of light there is no night and no need for the sun or moon. It truly will be like Mom's best birthday party for us, better than our best "Mother's Day" for her. Whatever it takes, may God bring us and our children to that bright land of heaven and to eternal day! Amen.