

Part I - God promises the world we all want

I'm really excited to begin this new series. For the past year, we have been on a journey together. Beginning in last April, we started looking at the gospel of Mark. We did this in order to focus on the central character in the whole Bible story, and the most important person to ever live. Jesus Christ. We looked at his life, ministry, death and resurrection. We learned why he came, what his life and death accomplished, and how we should respond. **We learned that the message of Jesus, or the gospel, is the good news of salvation for those who believe in him.**

Following our study of Mark's gospel, we studied Saint Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia. We did this in order to understand more clearly what the gospel is, and what it isn't. What is the foundational message of salvation we must believe in order to be saved? We also saw how religion can destroy the nature of the gospel, because it takes the attention off of what God did for us, and puts the attention on what we can do for God. Religion tells us how we can live good lives in order to be saved. It is a subtle change in the true gospel, but a small change like this is detrimental. It changes the gospel completely. It's kind of like adding oxygen to pure hydrogen. You no longer have hydrogen, you have water. You've made something completely new. It's the same with this. You cannot add anything to the message of the gospel without changing it completely.

So let me explain what we are doing now, and why I think it matters. Imagine sitting on the moon with a giant telescope. We started a year ago by zooming in, all the way to Jerusalem, to see the life and ministry of Jesus. What he did, and why he did it. Then we zoomed in even further to study the very heart of what the gospel message is, and how it changes us. What I want to do now is zoom all the way out to see the whole story. I want to put the gospel message in it's context. We have been learning the "who" and "what" of the gospel story. But now we want to focus on the "why." And to do this, we have to look at the **whole Bible story**.

You see, the Bible is not a random group of stories put together to form one big book. And Jesus is not simply one of those stories. The Bible is one story. It is God's unified story of redemption, and the gospel runs the whole way through. It is the story of God restoring his world back to its original design. And only until we zoom out and look at the whole story, can we begin to truly see its beauty.

Ok, enough of the introduction.



As we look at the Bible story, we will begin discussing what God's world was supposed to be like, in contrast to what it is. We will discuss the world we all want, verses the world we experience now.

I've heard it said that heaven (or the perfect world) is where the police are British, the cooks are French, the mechanics are German, the lovers are Italian, and it is all organized and run by the Swiss. In contrast, hell is where the police are German, the cooks British, the mechanics are French, the lovers Swiss, and it is all organized and run by the Italians! That is not a world I would want to live in!

What about you? If you ruled the world, what kind of place would it be? Would it be a good place for other people to live in? If you ruled the world, perhaps it would not be a very organized world because you are not a very organized person. Or perhaps if you ruled the world you would ensure that no one would like bananas, leaving them all for you to eat. Or perhaps everyone would have to play soccer even if they did not like the game. But you would always have to win of course, because you rule the world!

But in reality, the world the person sitting next to you wants might be quite different from yours. They might want a world in which no one plays football, and bananas don't exist because they are allergic to bananas. When we talk about our personal likes and dislikes, there probably isn't a world we all want. Just a world that you want.

But when we think about it more seriously, there are common themes to our hopes and dreams. Maybe there is a world we all want after all.

Isn't the world we all want a world in which there is no sickness, no sorrow, and no death? Isn't it a world where there is no poverty, no injustice, and no destruction? The world we all want is a world where everyone has more than enough food and more than enough water. The world we all want is a world in which we can all enjoy ourselves and reach our full potential. It's a place where we don't grow old and frail; where we don't have to cope with failing memories and bodies; where we never lose those we love; where we are never hurt by others. **We all want a world of love, peace, justice and harmony.** *But that isn't our world, is it?*

The last two chapters of the Bible tell us that there is such a world. These chapters paint a remarkably attractive and compelling picture for us of what things will be like in the end. Look at Revelation 21 v 4 and 22 v 1-3.

"He (God) will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."



“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.”

No more tears, no more death, no more pain. Abundance of food and drink. No more wanting, no more curse. *As we talk about this world, don't you find yourself wanting to experience that now?* I want that world so much! There are moments when I may imagine that I live in such a world, but they are just moments! Most of the time I know very well that this world isn't that world: unfortunately, **this world isn't the perfect world we all desire.** In fact, the more intense the difficulty and hurt, the more desperate I long for (GL, “Long for” means ‘strongly desire’) a world where the pain will all be gone.

But the beautiful thing is, as the Bible describes this world we all we want, it's claiming that this is the world God promises us.

This is what we are waiting for. The point is this...

God promises to give us the world we all want.

Look at what it says in Revelation 21 v 5 and 22 v 6. It's a bold promise.

“And he who was seated on the throne (King Jesus) said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

“And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”

The world we all want isn't going to come about by violent revolutions and wars. It's not going to be created by economic systems. It's not going to happen because philosophers persuade us to dream about it, or because politicians talk us into it, or because we vote for it. Capitalism, socialism, fascism and communism cannot deliver this kind of world. Self-help groups, hypnotism and psychotherapy cannot bring it into existence. Neither acts of terrorism nor UN resolutions will achieve it.



What the Bible claims is that only God can bring this awesome world we all want into existence. It also claims that God has promised to do precisely that.

Have you ever been in a situation where you wanted to make sure someone either understood what you were trying to say or just that they simply believed it?

Perhaps you prefaced your comment with the words: “You really need to listen to this”. Or maybe you said: “No, really! Listen!” The more important the statement, the more determined you would be about conveying it to the other person. The other day, my 4 year old son Cayden wanted to tell me something about a toy. I wasn’t paying attention, so he grabbed my cheeks, turned my head and said “daddy, your not listening with your face!” He wanted my attention.

This is exactly what the speaker in Revelation 21 and 22 does. He makes a point of emphasizing the reliability of this promise by repeating the phrase: **“These words are faithful and true”**. He is describing something so beautiful, so breath-taking, something that would satisfies our deepest desires, so he wants to make sure we do not make the mistake of dismissing them as fantasy: “These words are faithful and true!” It’s as if he’s grabbing us by the cheeks, looking us in the eyes and saying “Listen with your face! It’s important!”

Because, let’s be honest: it does sound too good to be true! Surely any reasonable person realizes that it sounds like a dream. Maybe we can get lost in the dream for a few moments. Maybe the world we read about in Revelation 21 and 22 is the kind of world to daydream about when we’ve got some free time, but we soon have to face reality again and come down to earth. It could be something as ordinary as seeing garbage on the streets; or feeling a hint of fear as we walk down a dark road; or as we feel the pain of a headache; or hear tragic news from a friend; or experience the loss of someone we love. It’s then we realize that, as good as all of this daydream sounds, it’s not going to happen. It’s always hard to look ahead to a promise like this, and truly believe it can happen.

But it’s much easier if we can look back and see some proof.

Imagine a random old man walks up to you and offers you a million dollars when he dies. You probably would be skeptical, and perhaps even run away! Now imagine that you learn that this man is very wealthy, and has no immediate family to receive his inheritance. And as you learn more of his story, you realize that he was best friends with your grandfather, who died of cancer long ago. As your grandfather was dying, this man promised him to always look after his family. This is his way of fulfilling that promise. *What do you do now?* You accept his gift. *Why?* **Because this man’s past validates his promise for the future.**

The fact is, God has already given us a glimpse of the world all want.



There was a time in history when one man was able to show what God's new world would look like. Look at Mark 5 v 21-43.

This book of the Bible is not talking about something that may happen in the future. It's describing something that has already happened. It's talking about a historical event. It was written by a man called Mark, who was recording the testimony of the Apostle Peter, who was with Jesus when these events happened. He was there. He saw it with his own eyes, more than 2000 years ago.

In Mark 5 we see Jesus as a miracle worker. He healed a woman with a serious health problem. She had spent all her money on doctors and there was no more hope of a cure. **Until Jesus came along!** She was convinced that if she could just touch his clothes, she would be made completely well (v 28). And that is what happened (v 34).

Mark goes on to tell us of a young girl who was raised from the dead. Everyone was convinced they had lost her (v 38). But Jesus simply speaks to her and she comes back to life (v 41-42). In Revelation we read about a world with "no more death or mourning or crying or pain" (21 v 4). **And here it is! The young girl is brought back from death. The mourning and crying stops.**

In Mark's account of the life of Jesus we discover that Jesus:

- calmed storms that threatened lives (see 4 v 39)
- exercised authority over evil spirits who held people in their vicious grip (see 5 v 8, 15)
- healed people of their illness even when no one else could help them (5 v 29)
- overcame death (5 v 41-42)
- satisfied the hungry (6 v 41-42)

Isn't that remarkable? **If what Mark is saying is true, then Jesus has the power to create the world we all want.** Unlike the description of the world we all want in Revelation, which is about the future, the account of the life of Jesus is a historical book. In other words, it doesn't simply describe what might be. It claims to tell us what has already happen.

Of course, it was only a glimpse of that world. Even as Jesus was giving life back to the girl, thousands of other people in the world were dying. So the world we all want did not exist fully. But it was the real thing. **It was as though a curtain was pulled back and we have been allowed to see a glimpse of that world.**

Have you ever tasted food as it's being cooked by someone who is a professional chef? Have you ever sneaked into the kitchen and dipped a spoon into whatever was cooking? If you have, you will have an advantage over the other people eating because you know how good the meal is going to be. That sneak preview will tantalize your taste buds! As you wait for the meal, you will find your mouth watering as you anticipate the full meal. In fact, you will find yourself growing impatient as you wait. It's a bit like that with all that Jesus did. It was a foretaste, a hint and a promise of the world we all want! As we read about it, we may find ourselves thinking: "I want that world, and I want it now!"



The promises God makes in Revelation don't seem quite so unbelievable if the events described by Mark actually happened. The world we all want isn't merely a fantasy or a dream. God has not only promised it as a future event, he has also given us a glimpse of it in history. **The world we all want can be the world we all live in.** The Bible tells us that it all depends on Jesus — on what he did and how we respond to him.

Next week we'll explore the world into which Jesus gave us an insight in more details. We'll see how the world he shows us is actually pretty much the world we all want. My hope is that by the end of this study, that each of us will see the how the gospel truly does give us what we are hoping for. That through Jesus we find a glimpse of the perfect world today, and we will live in God's perfect world for eternity.

Per vedere tutti i sermoni, vai a nuovavitasalerno.com/sermoni



RIUNIONE DOMENICALE

ORE 16:30 (TUTTE LE DOMENICHE)

King's Cross Irish Pub
VIA ROMA, 216 84121,
SALERNO

INFO@NUOVAVITASALERNO.COM

NUOVA VITA, SALERNO

NUOVAVITASALERNO.COM



/ NUOVAVITASALERNO.COM

