



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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November 17, 2013  
End Time 3 - Saints Triumphant  
Sermon Text: : [Revelation 22:1-5](#)  
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Isaiah 65:17-25](#)  
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 150](#)  
Second Lesson: [Revelation 22:1-5](#)  
Gospel Lesson: [Luke 20:27-38](#)

### **The Promises of End Time “...They Can No Longer Die for They Are Children of the Resurrection”**

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

Saints Triumphant as opposed to Saints Militant, or the Church Triumphant as opposed to the Church Militant, is the term that we focus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of End Time. Church Militant or the Saints Militant are we believers who are still on earth and still engage in the daily struggle as Satan tries to separate us from God. Church Triumphant or the Saints Triumphant are those who are with the Lord now, who have been called out of this world, and now the struggle is over. There is no more fighting against Satan. Satan no longer affects the Saints Triumphant.

So when we start talking about Saints Triumphant and we start looking at passages like this one from Revelation, we are really going into an area that we just don't know that much about, which I'm fully convinced we just can't grasp or really fully comprehend. While we live in this world, we still have that sinful nature and we still struggle against sin each and every day of our lives. We still struggle with doubts and uncertainties as we see the battle being waged around us, as we see the effects of sin tear apart lives and bring tears to cheeks. As we face that, the doubts come. We wonder. And we are uncertain. Even when we are at our best, it isn't anything close to what we are going to be like when we are the Saints Triumphant.

As I stand up here now and I'm going to tell you about what Revelation 22 says and tell you about what it's like to be the Saints Triumphant, I'm telling you something I know nothing about. Of course, you might think that's no different from any other week. But really, none of us can fully grasp this. All we can do though is focus on what God tells us. I believe when you read Revelation 22:1-5 and you think of your loved ones who have died in the Lord, it just brings a smile to your face and joy to your heart, doesn't it? Look at what it says. It's just incredible. I can't begin to imagine it.

It talks about the angel showing John this *“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.”* The river of the water of life... if you read commentators, they say this is really a picture of God's love for his people. On this side of heaven, I suppose the river of the water of life is God's beautiful Word, his Sacraments, everything he does to show us that our sins are forgiven and that heaven is open to us, all the promises he continually

holds before our eyes for all those times that we doubt and that we are uncertain. But picture this... when we are in heaven, that love of God will be there right in front of our eyes. We'll see it. We'll know it. And we'll never again ever face a doubt of that love. I can't begin to wrap my head around that. Can you? Never again will my sinful nature ever doubt my God.

Think of how we go through daily life and how often we doubt, how often we don't even think about the things of God. We're so busy with what we can see. Our God comes to us again and again with his Word while we're in this world and says, "Focus on these promises. They'll sustain you. Look at my Law and see how you failed me. But look at my Gospel. Look at how I love you and I've taken away that sin." He tells us again and again to focus on that and that will sustain us. When we get to heaven, we won't be focusing on it to sustain us because we won't have those struggles anymore. Can you begin to imagine that? Perfect love at all times? Not a love of self. A love of God and the fellow saints of God that are with you in heaven. Perfect love at all times. I can't begin to think about how glorious that is, but I believe it will be.

The promise that our God makes us when he said to those Sadducees that these people, the children of the resurrection, won't die because they are children of the resurrection is really depicted for us poetically in Revelation 22:1-5 where he talks about the river flows and on each side of the river is the tree of life. I don't know how to even begin to picture that. The tree is on both sides of the river? The only thing I can think that my Lord is trying to tell me is that in that first garden there were two trees in the middle. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. I think when God tells us that a tree of life is on both sides of the river of the water of life, he's telling us there is no more opportunity where we will sin against our God. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is not there. Now the only thing that is there is the tree of life and God's love that flows out from God and surrounds us, each and every day. The thing that is so completely different from here and now is it says that we'll see God.

He tries to picture things in ways that we can understand. I don't think there are literally 12 months in heaven because months are marked by day and night and the sun. If you noticed, he said there's no more night. There's no more sun because God himself is the source of light. There is no night and no darkness that brings uncertainty and challenges at times. There is no more darkness. There's only light. God is the source of that light and we see him face to face and his name is on our forehead. That's saying that we belong to him completely and absolutely. There isn't a single part of us that doesn't belong to him completely and absolutely when we are in heaven. There is no more sinful nature that leads us away from God. There's no sinful nature that causes ourselves pain or causes our loved ones pain because of the sins we commit. That possibility is gone because the only thing that is there is the tree of life. I think that's the picture that our God is trying to paint for us.

He's trying to tell us that we'll see him face to face. Whereas on earth, no one can see him face to face. Even Moses had to be put in a cleft of a rock on the side of the mountain and God caused his glory to pass behind him. Moses could only see him

from behind. But there we will see him face to face. I don't know just how glorious this will be because I can't wrap my head around perfection because I am a sinner.

We read things like this and we say that we'll be before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple, like it says in another place in Revelation. It says that we'll praise him, we'll worship him. On this side of heaven, we've still got a sinful nature. We read that and think, "Oh man. I don't want to be sitting there just singing for all eternity. That sounds kind of boring. Man, I'm going to be sitting in a pew for all of eternity and worship him?" Our sinful nature can find problems in what God says to us here because our sinful nature is so messed up. The one thing our God is trying to tell us is that whatever it is, it is absolute perfection and we'll enjoy it and love it at all times and in all ways.

Every year in the school, they have their pep rally before the tournaments. They make signs. Mr. Muchka used to have all those up his room. Do you still have them up in the room? I have to believe somewhere there is one that says "Knights Rule," right? Every year kids put that on a sign for a pep rally, don't they? Whatever your team's name is, it rules.

You're kind of setting your sights a little low, aren't you, just talking about basketball courts, if that's where you want to rule? Look at what the last verse, the last phrase of the last sentence tells you... you will reign with God forever and ever. You will rule with God. Not a basketball court. Not a tournament that lasts a weekend. But you will rule forever and ever and never die and never face anything that troubles you, anything that terrorizes you, anything that frightens you. You'll never again face sickness. You'll never again shed a tear of sadness. You'll never again be hungry. You'll never again be thirsty. Instead of that, you will rule with God. Can you imagine that? You're God is looking you in the eye and putting his hands on both of your shoulders and saying to you, "The day is coming. You are going to rule with me." That doesn't mean you have authority. All authority belongs to God, but I think what it is saying is that your will is going to be in perfect sync with God's. No longer will you but heads with God like you might with parents or coworkers. Now you are in complete sync with God and he gives you the grace of saying, "You will rule with me forever." I can't understand that. I can't fathom that. And I also can't wait for that.

For those of you that have lost loved ones, those that died in the Lord are enjoying this right now. That's the comfort our Savior gives us. That's the comfort he tells us to encourage one another with. That's the promise he tells us to hold out to those who the Lord may soon be calling home. That's the task he has given us. We do it because we know that the day is coming when we will rule forever and ever with our Lord. Amen.