



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
AND
IMMANUEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
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July 27, 2025

Pastor Jonathan Bare

7th Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [Acts 14:26,27](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 138A

Second Lesson/Sermon Text: [Revelation 7:9-17](#)

Gospel Lesson: [John 3:14-18](#)

UNDIVIDED ATTENTION
On the Mission to Our World
BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace, mercy and peace are yours in abundance from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Begin with the end in mind. That might be something that you hear in a business meeting as your company looks to set forth their 10-year vision or their target for the future. They are calling on you as a worker in that company to be part of that and work toward that common goal.

Begin with the end in mind. It might be something you hear from a professor as they lay out the syllabus for the upcoming semester. Think through, dear student, what will bring you to completion of this course?

Begin with the end in mind. It might also be something we tell ourselves as we set about a new routine—a weight loss program, an exercise program. Think about where this will take you.

Begin with the end in mind. It's good, practical advice for all sorts of areas of life.

Today, as we consider the mission of the church, our work together as we take God's Word out into this world, beginning with the end in mind is not just some good advice. It is absolutely vital as we carry out this work together. What end in mind does God want us to keep? It's not just some 10-year goal or where we are going to be as a church in 3 years or something like that. It's His ultimate end, as He describes it as we stand before that throne, as John sees this marvelous, marvelous vision of the future.

Listen again to those words. John writes: ***After these things I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing in front of the throne and of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and with palm branches in their hands. They called out with a loud voice and said: Salvation comes from our God, who sits on the throne, and from the Lamb. These are the ones who are coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Because of this they are in front of the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple. He who sits on the throne will spread His tent over them. They will never be hungry or thirsty ever again. The sun will never beat upon them, nor will any scorching heat, for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.***

Beginning with the end in mind is essential as we carry out our work. We live in a world that lacks clarity and lacks purpose. We live in a world that tells us there is no truth. "Your truth can be your truth but my truth is my truth, and ultimately, whatever you believe is what YOU believe." We live in a world with upside down priorities, a world that tells us it is most important that you have a successful life in this world. "If you can have that house, if you can have that family, if you can have that stuff, then you'll be happy, and that's what matters." In that world that we live in, that we interact with on a constant and daily basis, it's important that God give us through His Word, clarity.

Here in this Reading, we hear clearly what matters. These are those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. He looked and there before him was a great multitude that no one could count, doing what? They were standing before the Lamb. They are there in heaven. The one thing that matters, the one thing that is clear is that heaven is real, that those who believe in Jesus Christ will find themselves there before that throne, that our priorities are focused on that one thing and that thing alone. This is an important message for us to take to heart.

As we face all those different messages we are hearing from the world, all the different priorities we see in the world, we need to have clarity. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through Him. [\(John 14:6\)](#) God so loved the world (we heard in our Gospel message) that whoever believes in Him has eternal salvation. The one thing that matters; it's important that we understand this because as we look around the world, we see that there are so many people who don't believe this message.

John sees clearly who is standing there before the throne. ***After these things I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing in front of the throne and of the Lamb...*** When Jesus sent out His Church, He sent it to the entire the world.

The Asia-Oceania Team, your mission team, is taking God's message out to Asia. It serves 18 countries currently in Asia. Over 60% of the population lives in Asia. Currently the world's population sits around 8-billion people. That means in Asia alone, 4.8-billion people live there. Of that population, approximately 6% is Christian. That means a whopping 370-something-million people profess to be Christians. That's a huge number, a number we praise God for, a number that is larger than the entire population of the United States. But if you do a little bit of math, that means that in all of Asia, there are still 4.2-billion people that don't know about Jesus. Because this throne room is real, because Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life and no one comes to the Father, except through Him, that means everyone else who is on every other road is heading to hell. If nothing changes for those 4.2-billion people, they will find themselves eternally separated from Christ.

We don't have to go to the other side of the world to see this reality. Think about your own lives, the people that God has put you into contact with, your friends, your neighbors, your relatives. We don't have to think too long or too hard to find in that group people who don't know about Jesus. Maybe they never were brought up in a family that knew about Jesus and they never heard this message of eternal salvation. Maybe they were brought up, maybe even in this very church, but the pressures of this world, the messages that they hear all around them have taken them away from that truth. Their priorities have become other things rather than knowing Jesus and they've slipped away.

This vision before us gives us absolute clarity on the importance of the mission we have before us—a mission to take God's Word out to this world so that every nation, tribe, people and language might stand there. But you know, just having clarity doesn't necessarily mean that we will take action.

As an example of that, I go to the doctor and the doctor says "Jon, you really should lose a little bit of weight, and you really need to start exercising or this, this and this is likely to happen soon in your life." I'm perfectly clear on that when I leave the doctor's office, but then I go back home and there in front of me is a nice, big plate with heaped on seconds. And the next morning, well, that donut looks pretty good. Just being clear on something doesn't necessarily relate to change. Maybe that matters, maybe it doesn't, for my health and my life, but when it comes to sharing the Gospel, it's important that we consider this other aspect.

How often are we clear leaving church on Sunday morning that our mission is to go out into this world but then, well, maybe it's not all that important that I'm the one who shares the message. Or maybe we've tried sharing the message and we know what happens when we do. John was all too clear on what happens when you share the message.

We don't know exactly why John was on the island of Patmos or what exactly happened as he was sent there to be in exile, but earlier in Revelation he shares that he is there as a fellow partaker in the tribulation because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. [\(Revelation 1:9\)](#) Because he was boldly sharing his faith, John ends up being separated from those he brought to faith, condemned as a prisoner now, to go and live in exile on this island of Patmos.

You and I also understand what it's like to live in this world. The times when you've opened up your mouth and shared your faith and the times then that a relationship became cold, that a door was slammed in your face, that person that was close to you, that family member or friend now wants nothing to do with you. It takes courage to share our faith. This passage also gives us that very courage that we need. There are all sorts of reasons to not share our faith. We know them all too well.

As we go around the world, there are a group of students that are coming to our classes from one country that are regularly called into the police as they then go back and share the message. Another group of students from another country shared once that if they were arrested for sharing their faith, they could face 5 years in prison; if they baptized a baby, 5 years in prison; if they bring somebody into their church, 5 years in prison.

From another country we met a man named Assad. He was a man in a predominantly Muslim country. He became a Christian and was actively sharing his faith. One day he was called out to the street and was dragged into a neighboring house, thrown up against a wall, and beaten with bamboo rods. His phone was taken from him and was smashed on the ground. The message was clear. "Stop sharing your faith."

These are those who have come out of the great tribulation. These are those who came out of this world, out of the problems, the worries, yes, even the persecution that they and you and I might face for sharing our faith. That's the very thing that gives us courage, though. These are those that have come out of that. Whether it's a beating or a door slammed in your face, that's not the end. These are those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and now they stand before the throne of God eternally. There is nothing else that matters more than that.

Jesus, your Shepherd, has died for you. He has given you faith. He has given you a robe of righteousness and now you have the privilege of sharing this message. And that gives you the courage to share it.

That man, Assad, after he was beaten for his faith, shared this. "I've never been more joyful in my whole life because I know where I am going. I've never been more joyful in my whole life. If Jesus came and died on the cross for me, if He suffered for me, why shouldn't I suffer a little bit for Him?" Beginning with the end in mind gives us the courage to share.

We see one more thing in this Lesson. In this throne room, as we look and see people from every tribe, nation, language, we see those people standing around the throne. I want you to imagine with me for a bit that you are standing there because you are. Look around and see the different people that you see standing around you. Who are they and how did they get there?

- Look right over there. There is a business man. He got there because somebody sat down in the plane next to him and asked him, "Where are you going, not just for this life but for eternity?"
- There is another person there; an old man. He is there because the boy that mows his lawn got a glass of water after he was done and started talking with him about going to church on Sunday.
- There is another person there. He is a factory worker. The person on the line with him shared about Jesus and asked him if he would like to come to church.
- There is a little child. That child was one who was brought by his parents to be washed in a baptismal font like this. He was brought into the kingdom of God. He was trained by his parents. He was taught about Jesus, the one that loved him so much that He came to die for him.

Do you see what is common about all those people? They are there because someone shared the message of eternal salvation with them.

The thing we see in this passage from Revelation is that you and I are called. We receive a calling, a vocation into this world. A vocation is simply your various tasks that God has given to you in this world. Think about those lists of the people that we talked about earlier in the Sermon, the people that you know that no longer believe in Jesus or never did, the people who need desperately to know about this message of eternal salvation so that they might be standing there with us in that throne room. You know them because of your various roles that God has given you in your life. A mother, a father, a grandmother, a grandfather, a worker in a factory or a company, a clerk or a secretary—you know them because you're a neighbor. You know them because you are a shopper at a store. All of these different vocations are callings that God gives us and sends us out into this world to live, opportunities that He provides to you and to me to share our faith.

You know there is something really amazing about how God has carried this out in this world. He could have used any means He wanted to fill that throne room and yet He calls you and me. "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded." ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)) He uses us.

And if that weren't enough, then He calls us together into a community that we call The Church, to carry out work that we can't do by ourselves—the work of calling pastors and teachers, the work of running a school, the work of reaching out into our community in

an organized way. He calls us to work together with the other churches around us. It's an amazing thing that you are doing right here right now is as you look at working together with another church in your area and collaborating in mission together to do what individual people can't do. And then, God calls us to work together with all of the other Christians that believe and are teaching the same things. In the WELS, we call that the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, a synod walking together to do those things that individual churches can't do—the training of pastors and teachers, the sending out of missionaries into all the world so that this throne room might look like it looks in Revelation. ***...I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing in front of the throne and of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and with palm branches in their hands. They called out with a loud voice and said: Salvation comes from our God, who sits on the throne, and from the Lamb.***

And so, **begin with the end in mind.** Begin, go, and share this message. Go, because you are clear on what is in front of you. Go, because you have been given courage by your God. And go, because God has called YOU into His mission field. To Him be the glory! Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.