

GOD'S FIRSTFRUITS - A LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

The other week I spoke a little bit about how the Protestant/Evangelical model (or understanding) of salvation is both warped and unscriptural because it's always presented as an "*all or nothing*" proposition. What's preached is that those who are saved will get everything heaven has to offer, while those who are lost get the worst Hell (ie: the Lake of Fire) can dish out.

Religious leaders may speak of Christian "*rewards*" every now and then, but it's clear from what they preach every Sunday, they don't really believe anything they say in this regard because they continue to present salvation as a "*package deal*" whereby we all get basically the same thing as long as we "make it" to heaven. I've already shared why I believe this view is unscriptural, but I'd like to touch on this subject again tonight, from a slightly different angle. Tonight I want to present what I believe to be God's *overall perspective* of man's redemption, which you will see is quite different from the traditional view.

Let me start off by saying that most Christians, though they may not see themselves as theological Calvinists, have nevertheless adopted the same *attitude* towards mankind that Calvin had. If you know anything about John Calvin's doctrine, you will know that his view of redemption was that the human race is one large mass of doomed souls, blindly running over the cliff of eternal damnation. In eternity past, God predestined and elected a few of these people—and I mean a few—to be saved. The rest of mankind, He predestined to be lost. As the years roll by, and mankind continues to plunge into the abyss in giant waves, God looks down from heaven and sees one of His elect here, and one over there, and He reaches down and plucks them out of that great mass which is perishing.

Many Christians do not agree with Calvin's view of *predestination*. They don't believe God predestines people to be lost. Rather, they believe God gives each individual a chance and a choice to be saved, and that those who end up lost, end up that way, not because God for-ordained that they would be lost, but because they have freely chosen to reject His salvation. However, although Christians may disagree over Calvin's view of predestination, they all agree with the *outcome* of his theology—which is that the *vast majority* of the human race will be lost. The only difference is the issue of *who decides* the vast majority will be lost. Calvinists believe God decided in eternity past that the majority would be lost. Non-Calvinists believe that each individual will decide the issue in this life. But even though they believe it is the individual who will make the final choice, they also believe the vast majority of those individuals will make the *wrong* choice. So in the end, *everyone agrees* with Calvin: probably 95% of the human race is lost.

I reject this view for several reasons. First of all, it's not Scriptural. Also, it blinds us to the fact that there *different kinds* of redemption revealed in Scripture. And, it keeps us from understanding what God had in mind when He created mankind to begin with.

Now, before I go any further, I want to make it clear that I am *not* a Universalist and I am not teaching Universalism in any form or degree. Universalism is a heresy. The Scripture says very clearly that *many* people will be lost eternally. To reject this truth is to walk in religious delusion. But let me say this about Universalism—it was a *reaction against* the Reformation Theology of John Calvin. It came forth as an answer to the view that 95% of God's creation will be lost. Unfortunately however, the answer to Calvin's error is *not* Universalism. Somewhere between the error of Calvin and the error of Universalism lies the truth.

You all know the current pop phrase: “*It’s all about me*”. Well, long before the Word of Faith movement got started, long before the Great Apostasy got off the ground, the Evangelical gospel has been *that kind* of message. The Evangelical message has always been: “it’s all about me”. It’s all about “me” getting saved and escaping Hell. It’s all about “me” getting my needs met while alive on this earth. And when I die, it’s all about “me” going to Heaven and getting my five-story mansion.

I’m going to show you from the Scripture tonight that our redemption is *not* all about us. The Scripture clearly reveals that God is doing *much more* than saving us from Hell, so we can live forever in Heaven. God is doing several things with regard to our salvation. One thing He is doing is bringing *a remnant* of the Church to a place of sinless perfection, so they will be a suitable “wife” for his Son.

But there is something else God is doing, which very few Christians understand. He is creating a “city” which will function as a light to “*the nations which are saved*” for all Eternity. So in the final analysis, our salvation isn’t about us at all; it’s about some one else. It’s about the nations—and when I say it’s about the nations, I’m not talking about “evangelizing” the nations. I’m talking about God’s desire to *dwell among* the nations, through His people, the Church, which is the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. In order to give you a clear picture of God’s ultimate intention for us, I’ll give you *the conclusion* of the matter first. Then I’ll go back and fill in the blank spaces.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Revelation 21:1-4

I want to point out a few things in this passage which should be obvious, but which aren’t because of what we have all been taught about salvation. In this vision, John is seeing what will happen as we go into *Eternity*. The age of Law (Old Testament) is over; the age of Grace (New Testament) is over; the Kingdom age (Thousand-year reign of Christ, with the saints, on earth) is over. What John sees here has nothing to do with “evangelizing the nations” during the Church age. It has nothing to do “ruling over the nations” during the Kingdom age. The Great White Throne judgment has already taken place. Everyone who has ever lived has been raised from the dead and judged, and they are in the place they deserve.

The last thing God does before we go into Eternity is create a new heaven and a new earth. When describing these things, John says: “*...and there was no more sea*”. I don’t believe this is primarily a reference to literal oceans—though it could include that idea. In Scripture, particularly the Psalms and the book of Revelation, the “sea” represents the nations, or the mass of unsaved humanity. So I believe that what John is describing in this vision is the reality that as we go into Eternity, there will be *no more* mass of doomed souls, rushing headlong over the abyss into eternal torment.

Next, John sees the New Jerusalem, descending out of the new heaven, to the new earth. He says this city is: “...*prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*”. Now I realize most people believe this city is just that: a literal city, because John describes its dimensions, and the wall that surrounds it, and its gates, etc. But I want you to notice what the angel says to John a few verses later about this city:

*And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, **I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife**. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, **and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,***

Revelation 21:9-10

When John describes the New Jerusalem he says it's “adorned as a bride”. This description *alone* does not necessarily mean the city is actually *a people*. John could have simply been saying that the city was “all decked out”. However, when the angel describes the city to John, he doesn't say the city is adorned *as a* bride. He specifically says the city *is* the bride. The city *is* the Lamb's wife. So the New Jerusalem *is a people*—it's the completed, glorified Church of Jesus Christ.

After the Church (New Jerusalem) comes down from the new heaven, John hears a great voice from heaven saying: “*Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men*”. What do you suppose that “tabernacle” is? The tabernacle is the city! The tabernacle is the Church! The term tabernacle here is being used in the sense of “a dwelling place”. What the voice was saying was: “*Behold, the dwelling place of God is with men*”. Again, what or who is God's dwelling place?

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.
Romans 8:9

*And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, **I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.***

II. Corinthians 6:16

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

Ephesians 3:17

If the tabernacle is a reference to the Church, the New Jerusalem, then who are the “men” in that passage? Who is God going to dwell with? God dwells *in* the Church. But when talking about these “men”, it doesn't say He will dwell in them; it says He will dwell *with* them. Can you see that? God dwells *in* the city, but He dwells *with* the “men”. Again, who are these “men”. Well it tells us in the next few verses.

*And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. **And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.** And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. **And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.***

Revelation 21:22-26

The “men” among whom God will dwell are “the nations of them which are saved”. The saved nations will walk in the light of the city. The saved nations, and the “kings” of those saved nations, will bring their glory and honor into the city. So the reality John is being shown through this vision is that as we go into Eternity, there will *still be* people who are *not* part of the Church. There will *still be* people who are *not* part of the New Jerusalem. There will *still be* people who are not partaking of the *same kind* of redemption we are, but these people are *not* eternally lost; they are not in the Lake of Fire. They are redeemed, but they are not part of the city. Can you see that? They are not part of the Church, but neither are they lost. They will walk in the light of the Church.

When the voice from heaven said: “the tabernacle of God is with men”, what it was really saying was this: “the Church of God is with the saved nations”. That’s the meaning of those words. What this also means is, all the things which are said after that statement are meant for the saved nations, not for the city. When the voice said: “...and he [God] will dwell **with** them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be **with** them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”—that voice was talking about the nations, not the city.

God doesn’t dwell *with* the city; He dwells *in* the city. When the voice said God would wipe away all tears, he’s not talking about the city—our tears were wiped away a thousand years earlier. When the voice says there will be no more death and sorrow and crying and pain, it’s not talking about the city—our death and sorrow and crying and pain ended a thousand years earlier. All these things are a reference to the saved nations. God is going to do all these things for the saved nations *through* the Church!

Doesn’t the Scripture say we (the Church) will be God’s kings and priests?

*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but **they shall be priests** of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him **a thousand years.***

Revelation 20:6

*And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and **his servants shall serve him**: And they shall see his face; and **his name shall be in their foreheads.** And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and **they shall reign for ever and ever.***

Revelation 22:3-5

God didn't spend the last 6000 years creating a "kingdom of priests" (which was National Israel), or a "holy" and a "royal priesthood" (which is the Church) for no reason! During the Kingdom age, that priesthood is going to rule and reign with Messiah over the saved nations for a thousand years. Then, after the Kingdom age, as we go into Eternity, that priesthood (ie: *those who have the name of God written in their foreheads*) "shall reign for ever and ever".

Who do we think we are going to be kings over? Who do we think we are going to be priests to? Do you think we will take turns ruling over each other and playing priest for each other, like the Catholic organization? Of course not! We will be ruling over the "nations which are saved".

Although we will certainly enjoy the new heaven and the new earth, and we will no doubt enjoy being with each other, this is *not* the main reason God saved us. His ultimate intention for us is that we become *His light* to others. His goal for us is that we become vessels *through which* He might *dwell with* the nations of the earth. His intention is that we become vessels *through which* He might shepherd and guide the nations of the earth, forever.

The nature of God is to pour out. When we have been fully conformed to His image, this will be our nature as well. We would never be happy going through eternity, getting, getting, getting, taking, taking, taking, for ourselves. We are going to be in God's image; we are going to be His light; we will be doing what He does for all eternity—and what God does is pour out for others. He is the antithesis of selfishness. He is constantly nurturing and providing for others. He is constantly giving His life and His light to others. And that's what *we* will be doing. We will be pouring out our lives for the nations which are saved.

The idea that the *ultimate purpose* of the New Jerusalem is not to enjoy paradise forever, but to be a light to the saved nations, is a totally foreign concept to Christians because the Protestant/Evangelical concept of salvation has always been an all-or-nothing, package deal. If you are saved, you automatically become part of the New Jerusalem—that's part of the *salvation package*. Anyone who is *not* part of the New Jerusalem is automatically assumed to be lost. There is no in between. There is no room in the Evangelical gospel for people who are not part of the Church, but who also are not in the Lake of Fire.

And here's something else about the saved nations that will send Evangelicals into a dither: it says of these nations that they have their names written in the Lamb's book of life!

*And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And **there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.***

Revelation 21:24-27

So here we have a class of people who go into Eternity with the Church, who have their names written in the Lamb's book of life, but who are not *part of* the Church! How is that possible? How is it possible to have your name written in the Book of Life, and have eternal life, but *not* be part of the Church of Jesus Christ? That's not just a foreign concept to Evangelicals, that's heresy! In their theology, if you aren't part of the Church, brother, you ain't saved!

I'm not saying all this to confuse you, and I'm not pulling a Billy Graham on you. I'm not saying there are many paths to God. I don't believe today's atheists and pagans and Hindus and Muslims and Buddhists will somehow end up in the saved nations. I'm just trying to expand your vision of what God is doing. He has been doing the same thing from the beginning. He has been using His people as a light to the nations. This is why He called and chose National Israel in the Old Testament; and this is why He opened that same call to us Gentiles under the New Testament.

It was never God's intention just to "save" a minuscule portion of the human race and cast the rest into the Lake of Fire. It has always been His intention to take unto himself a portion of mankind, set it aside for His use and to be His in a peculiar way, so that *through them* He could dwell with *the remainder* of the human race: that is, with the remainder that doesn't end up eternally lost. And this is exactly what the apostle James was talking about when he said:

*Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of **firstfruits** of his **creatures**.*

James 1:18

We talked a little bit about the concept of the firstfruits in our last chat sessions. I said there will be a firstfruits company *within* the Church which will gain complete victory over sin, self and Satan, and that this company of saints is represented by the "manchild" in Revelation chapter twelve. The firstfruits *of the Church* are the overcomers, and they will rule and reign with Christ during the next age. In this passage James is also talking about the concept of a firstfruits, but he's not referring to a remnant of overcomers within the Church; he's talking about the *Church itself*. We (the Church itself) are a kind of firstfruits of *mankind*. I like the way the Amplified Bible renders this passage. It says:

*And it was of His own [free] will that He gave us birth [as sons] by [His] Word of Truth, so that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures [a **sample of what He created to be consecrated to Himself**].*

The Amplified Bible

James is saying that we (Christians) are a kind of "*firstfruits*" of God's creatures. The term firstfruits of his creatures doesn't mean that the rest of the creatures perish. It means that we hold a special place among the rest of the creatures. It means that we have a relationship with God that the rest of the creatures don't have. We (the Church) are *a sample* of His creatures; we are not the whole thing. We are a small portion who have been consecrated to Him in a way the rest have not.

If the Church is the only group of people who don't end up in the Lake of Fire, then the whole concept of a "firstfruits of God's creatures" is a joke, and what James said is not true. The firstfruits aren't really a firstfruits—they are the whole ball of wax. They are it, and the rest of the harvest is thrown into the fire. The fact that we are merely a firstfruits of God's creatures is exactly what John was shown in Revelation chapter 21. The New Jerusalem (Church) is not the whole ball of wax. That city is the *firstfruits* of God's creatures, and the saved nations are *the rest* of His creatures.

The saved nations are redeemed, but not in the same exact way we have been redeemed. They have eternal life, but not the same kind of eternal life we have. They have a relationship with God, but it's not the same kind of relationship we have with Him. God will walk *with* them, but He dwells *in* us. They walk in the light of the city, but we *are* the city! We *are* the light they walk in.

I want to take a few minutes and look at what the Scripture says about firstfruits. The term "firstfruits" means: "that which is first taken from anything". It denotes the "first portion" of something. Usually the firstfruits (or the first portion) is offered to God. Under the Old Covenant, the concept of firstfruits included the harvest of Israel, the first-born of Israel, and the nation of Israel itself.

*Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall **reap the harvest thereof**, then ye shall bring **a sheaf of the firstfruits** of your harvest unto the priest: And **he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD**, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.*

Leviticus 23:10-11

So the firstfruits of Israel's harvest were to be offered to God. It's interesting to note that the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead and ascended to the Father on the literal Jewish Feast of Firstfruits. He fulfilled the type and shadow which was contained in the Old Testament ceremony of the Feast of First Fruits. This is why Paul said things like: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become **the firstfruits** of them that slept" (I. Cor. 15:20); and "But every man in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits**; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (I. Cor. 15:23).

Jesus was the first "sheaf" of the resurrection. When He ascended the Father, He was *presenting Himself* as the firstfruits of God's New Creation Man. Again, the fact that there is a "firstfruits" of something simply means that there is more to follow. Jesus was the first sheaf of the resurrection, but there is more to follow. He is the firstborn among *many* brethren (Rom. 8:29). God is going to be *many son* to glory (Heb. 2:10) as the result of His suffering, death, and resurrection.

*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, **Sanctify unto me all the firstborn**, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.*

Exodus 13:1-2

*And I, behold, **I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn** that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine; **Because all the firstborn are mine**; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the LORD.*

Numbers 3:12-13

Again we can see the concept of the firstfruits in the requirement that all the first born of Israel be given to God. But instead of actually taking each firstborn, God took the Levites in their place. Thus, the Levites became the firstfruits of the nation. The fact that God took the Levites as a firstfruits of the nation did not mean that the rest of the nation was cast aside or discarded. It simply meant that the Levites held a special place *within* the nation.

*Israel was holiness unto the LORD, and **the firstfruits of his increase**: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD.*

Jeremiah 2:3

*They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for **I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.***

Jeremiah 31:9

Here we find that National Israel itself was a kind of firstfruits. It was a firstfruits of God's increase *in the earth*. The term "in the earth" means that Israel was a firstfruits of *mankind* unto God. Once again, it's not that God saved the firstfruits (National Israel) and then destroyed the rest of the crop (nations). God chose Israel to be *His representative* in the earth. The nation of Israel was to function as a spiritual "*light*" to the rest of mankind. That's why we find verses like the following in the Scripture:

*Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then **ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people**: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a **kingdom of priests**, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

Exodus 19:3-6

*And ye shall **be holy** unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have **severed you from other people**, that ye should be mine.*

Leviticus 20:26

*For thou art an **holy people** unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath **chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.***

Deuteronomy 7:6

God didn't set Israel aside so they could spend the rest of their days reveling in their relationship with Him. He didn't make them a special people "above all people" of the earth so they could spend their time glorying in their own "specialness" while the rest of mankind went over the cliff to eternal damnation. God chose them to represent Himself to the rest of mankind. That's why the Scripture says:

*Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that **ye should do so in the land** whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for **this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations**, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.*

Deuteronomy 4:5-6

This is why God said Israel would be a “*kingdom of priests*”. He didn’t mean they were supposed to take turns playing “priest” for one another, like the Catholic organization does. Neither was He saying every Hebrew could minister in the Tabernacle. Only the firstfruits (Levites) had that privilege. What God was saying was that by *exhibiting righteous behavior*, every Hebrew could function as a “*light*” to those of the nations he came in contact with. By living a consecrated life of obedience, every Hebrew could *represent God* to those who knew nothing of Him.

The focus of God was not on the Hebrew nation, per say, but on what He wanted that nation *to do*. He wanted them to be a light to others. That’s *the reason* He called them. That’s *the reason* He set them apart. That’s *the reason* He made them a peculiar people. It wasn’t that He predestined and elected the people Israel to be “saved” before the foundation of the world, and then predestined the rest of the population of the earth to be eternally lost. Israel was a firstfruits of *mankind*. Israel was the “firstfruits” of God’s “increase” in the earth. Many people among the nations came to acknowledge Israel’s God as the only true God through the priestly work (ie: the testimony) of Israel.

The same call that was given to National Israel is given to the New Testament Church. Just like Israel of old, we are to function as a light to the nations. Just like Israel of old, we are to function as God’s representative in the earth. Just as Israel was called a “kingdom of priests”, so the Church is called a “royal priesthood” and a “holy priesthood”.

*Ye (believers) are **the light of the world**. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Let your light so shine before men, that they may **see your good works**, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Matthew 5:14 & 16

*Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, **in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation**, among whom **ye shine as lights** in the world.*

Philippians 2:15

*Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an **holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

I. Peter 2:5

*But ye are a **chosen** generation, a **royal priesthood**, an **holy nation**, a **peculiar people**; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now **the people of God**: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

I. Peter 2:9-10

The traditional view regarding *the purpose* of our “being a light to the nations” is correct, but it is also spiritually immature, for the traditional view says *the reason* we are to be a light is to get people saved. We give the light of the Gospel to the nations. Those who accept that light will be saved and become part of the New Jerusalem. Those who reject that light will be lost and spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. All this is true; but it’s not the *whole* truth. It’s correct; but it’s not the whole picture. There is *another level* of understanding when it comes to being a light to the nations—and that’s what John was describing.

The light we will *be* to the nations as we go into Eternity has nothing to do with preaching the gospel to them. They don’t need to hear the gospel because they already have eternal life in some sense. Rather, being a light to the nations at this point has to do with being the vessels *through which* God will dwell with them. So in both the Kingdom age and in Eternity, God’s purpose for us lies with the nations of the earth. During the Kingdom age, we will be ruling over them with a rod of iron, with Messiah. Then, as we move forward into Eternity, we will be a light to them.

*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And **for their sakes** I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*

John 17:17-19

*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who **for the joy that was set before him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Hebrews 12:2

Jesus came to earth to do the will of his Father, and that will was for Him to become the Savior of mankind. The Scripture says Jesus was aware of why he was born into the world, and there is no doubt the knowledge that many would find eternal life through His sacrifice was the “joy” He kept ever before His eyes, in order to endure the suffering it would take to redeem us. I believe this understanding also helped the Lord to sanctify Himself. He knew he was sanctifying Himself for the good of others. He knew that if he sanctified himself, many would be made righteous because of that.

Having a vision of what God’s intention is for us can help in the same way. Knowing that God wants to use us to guide the saved nations in the next age, and then be a light to them in Eternity, can give us some *additional motivation* to sanctify ourselves. Knowing some of what God has in store for us is a “joy” we can set before our eyes, so we will endure whatever it takes to be made that kind of vessels.

The greater a vision we have, the less likely it will be that we get consumed with our own little problems. The greater the vision, the more we will be able to keep our eyes on the thing that's important. That's why I am sharing this with you tonight. God wants to increase our vision. He wants to set a joy before us, so we will be encouraged to sanctify ourselves. He wants to set a joy before us, so we will endure the chastening and the suffering it takes to *become the light of God*.

God has called us to be His *unique* possession. He has called us to be the firstfruits of His creatures. He has called us to be His tabernacle, His dwelling place, not so he can send the rest of mankind to Hell, but that through us, He can walk with the "nations which are saved" for all Eternity. *We are a privileged people!* We have no idea what awesome things God is offering us, and has in store for us, if we will just lay down our petty self-wills and let Him make us the vessels He wants us to be.