

Text: Revelation 21:3-4

Theme: Anticipating the Good Life

April 24, 2016

Being from Nebraska, I take notice of the sign every time I travel to visit my parents. As I cross the state line in Sioux City, Nebraska, I know I will see the sign, "Welcome to Nebraska, the Good Life." Although Nebraska is a good life, I've come to enjoy Wisconsin even more. Yet as we look at our text, neither Nebraska nor Wisconsin matter because the good life, our eternal life is the life we are waiting for, the life we're ultimately anticipating as the good life.

I. Our great God has offered us the good life, eternal life. A. Yet, sadly for many, life here is as good as it gets. 1. This life is as good as it gets because they're not expecting anything better. For many, nothing better is coming, unless retirement is perceived as better than the present. For them, every day is just another day. They put in their time, do their best to leave their mark because something inside them tells them that that's the least they can do to acknowledge they existed. It's a depressing view of life and the future. We, too, have moments when we experience one of those senior moments where we forget that the good life is yet to come.

2. This life is as good as it gets because, in their minds, there's nothing better out there. Trapped in a life that could be so much better. Perhaps that's how we could describe their lives. Because they're unaware or choose not to believe in the good life of heaven, they've settled. They've settled for something less than the great life. Some days, we, too, settle for second best. Rather than making the most of each day in anticipation of that good life, we, too, find ourselves trapped in the notion that life is what it is, that all we can do is keep moving. If it sounds discouraging, that's because it is, but life is designed to be far better than going through the motions.

3. This life is as good as it gets for some because they have a faulty understanding of good. Have you ever bought a new couch or a new stove only to find out that it was broken, that it didn't work as it was supposed to work, that it had a faulty piece on it? Many today have a faulty, broken understanding of good. They look around, think things are okay, and conclude that life is good. They struggle through another work week and find themselves sitting at their cabin for the weekend thinking that life is good. That may be a definition of good, but it's surely not God's definition nor a definition that has any connection to the good life of heaven.

B. Convinced that heaven is the real good life, what are we anticipating as the good life? 1. We're anticipating God walking beside us. Did you notice? Four times our text mentions that God will be with us! Imagine for a moment that God was visibly walking beside you, that throughout your entire day, week, and month, God was always at your side. Would you still worry, get fatigued, stressed out, exhausted? Would you spend time asking all those "what if" questions? How much brain time would you spend trying to figure out your future? Different doesn't even begin to describe what will be ours as that eternal good life finally arrives.

2. We're also anticipating that everyone around us will likewise be a child of God. Go back to your imagination for a moment. If every person you met tomorrow and Wednesday afternoon and Friday night was a Christian, would anyone be standing in line at Kwik Trip grumbling because there are two people ahead of them? Would

anyone be lazy on the job, goof off in school, or give you even the slightest reason to hold a grudge? I don't know what heaven will be like, but we know that everyone there will be a Christian which makes life look so great that we wait with eager anticipation for that day when we cross the finish line that says, "Welcome to the good life!"

3. We're anticipating a time when there will be no more tears of sorrow. I haven't checked lately, but the number is some over 90. That's how many times I've been with a family at a time of loss, the number of times I've witnessed first hand their sorrow and sadness. Maybe your numbers are different, but imagine that God reset the counter and the number was zero, that never again would you experience tears of sorrow, that never again would you have to say good-bye to a loved one, that never again would you have to adjust to life without them. When the good life arrives, there will be no more sorrow, no more tears, no more sadness because God will make it all better.

4. We're anticipating a time when there will be no more tears of pain. If you are over 25, how many of you have never experienced pain? Perhaps I should ask the question a different way for those of us who are a bit older, "How many of you live with daily pain?" We know all about pain. But imagine that all that pain vanished, that tomorrow morning when you woke up, you were pain-free forever! We can't even wrap our brains around that notion because we've never been pain-free. Yet as we anticipate heaven, as we anticipate the genuine, one-of-a-kind good life, God Himself promises that it will be pain-free, that you will never shed a tear of pain, ever.

5. We're anticipating a time when life will be worry-free. Pain-free will be great, but pain-free and worry-free will be even better. How many of you worry about something at least once a month, once a week, or once a day? It has been said that worry and the stress it creates causes more illnesses than anything else and I'm convinced it's true. In the good life of heaven, nothing will register on your worry meter; nothing will cause stress or fatigue. Think how many hours of free time will we gain every week in heaven! If we think a vacation is a great thing here. Imagine life without stress, worry, or sleepless nights. It will be better than the best vacation ever!

6. We're anticipating a life beyond our comprehension. Do we have any dreamers sitting here this morning? If you're a dreamer that some think are thinking a little too far outside of the box, even you aren't dreaming big enough, broad enough, or amazingly enough about the good life. We have glimpses, but that's all they are, tiny moments where we get a two second glance at one aspect of heaven. But what about all the rest of heaven? What about the 99.999% of the good life that God hasn't shown us? We can dream, but we can't begin to comprehend the wonder, and the amazement of what it will be like the moment we take that first step into the good life of heaven.

7. The sign may be as you enter Nebraska, but the sign is actually in the wrong place. It's actually when you take that first step in heaven that you will see the sign, "Welcome to the good life," in its proper location. Amen.