

CREATION CARRIERS AND CREATION SEERS



Rev. Peggy Casteel-Huston
April 4, 2021
Easter Sunday

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen indeed.

Friends hear the good news – God raised Jesus from the dead. God is stronger than death and as the Apostle Paul says in Romans 8:11 God who raised Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. It is the assurance that God can and will give us eternal life.

Alleluia! Christ has been raised from the dead!

Every Sunday is a celebration of Easter. Every Sunday is our reminder that in Christ God is making all things new. Every Sunday our song should be:

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen indeed.

Listen now for the word of God from Revelation 21: 1-7.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.”

And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

This is the word of God, thanks be to God!

The apostle John shares with us just a taste of what we will experience when God brings the new Jerusalem. John uses great imagery and says it will be like a bride who is adorned for her husband.

God gives John the ability to see some of the ways God is making all things new. The Greek for the word **new means renewed** in the same way as a house has gets restored to its former glory. It is not God making new things – God is renewing all things making the world as it was intended to be.

In this renewal, God is the Temple and as we move into the new Jerusalem we move into God and in Him we live and move and have our being. In this renewal, God’s creative love expands – God retreats so that it creates space for more love.

This is God’s assurance to John to share with all the churches – Alleluia! Friends, the New Jerusalem is coming – someday! Alleluia! There is more good news to share. Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, the long hoped-for reign of God is a present reality here and now. It is not the new Jerusalem. We still live in the ‘not yet’. But in Jesus’ death and resurrection is the confirmation that God’s kingdom brings life. In the earthly and in the risen Jesus, God’s will is being done on earth as it is in heaven – (Lord’s prayer). Through Christ comes the renewal of all things.

But until then – until the new Jerusalem comes - what is going on?

The Apostle John’s writings show us that the hope of the **new creation grinds every day against the old creation**, beginning in a garden where everything goes wrong grinding away, grinding away until it will finally end in a garden

city where God will have the final say and we will no longer deal with the effects of the old creation.

It makes me think of the caterpillar as it works its way into becoming a butterfly. It takes a lot of work. It goes through several molting processes and lots of stages until it forms a chrysalis, but even there **the caterpillar is not resting**. The body of the caterpillar is busy transforming into a butterfly. Even when it emerges from the chrysalis its body does not rest. The butterfly's body pumps fluid from its abdomen to its veins to expand the wings – laboring, laboring, laboring until the butterfly can take flight. Similarly, the old creation is laboring, laboring, laboring until the new Jerusalem comes and God makes a home among us.

N.T. Wright in his understanding of what is happening during this time that creation is awaiting God's new creation is that we have a purpose. Our purpose is to be the ones who stand between heaven and earth making the power of God known, a power that can withstand any evil even the worst things that humanity can possibly do, a power that conquers death, a power where God can make the impossible – possible. Wright has a term for it – he calls us **Creation Carriers**.

Creation Carriers, according to Wright, are to rise up and speak about the new creation already found in Jesus. We are to speak what we know into a world that thinks it can bring a new creation to bear all by itself. We are to speak that this world has a Creator. We are to speak hope and life, and we are to speak to a world about how important it is to be neighbors and to love one another.

As Creation Carriers, we are to crown God with glory and honor in everything we do and in everything we say. As Creation Carriers, we are to proclaim every day:

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen indeed!

I would add to what N.T. Wright says that we are not only Creation Carriers, we are **Creation Seers**. God wants to give us glimpses and evidence of the new creation coming. This is what God did for the Apostle John in Revelation chapters 4 & 5.

The Apostle John was given a vision for the Church - one we need to see. As Creation Seers we look to see the wonder of God. We know that the throne of God is there, and we know the One seated on it. We need to help others that they may also see the wonder of God.

In Revelation chapters 4 & 5, John's eyes are opened, and he sees visions, his senses are all used. John has a vision in the Spirit that changes everything for the Apostle John so that he can give the church insight into what is to come.

This vision of the throne that John sees evokes the exultation, majesty, power and glory that belong to God. At the center of it all is the One who reigns. The One who sits on the throne is not out of control but in control of all things.

John sees the throne as the center of activity. John sees the 12 twelve tribes, the 12 apostles all pressing towards the throne - the lion, the ox, the swiftest and wisest and the angels thousands of them everything pressing in towards the throne. Then John sees the lamb, the root of David, who has the power to break the seals - the lamb of God who has collected all creation to Himself and is given all the prayers of the saints.

And then what happens?

Those at the throne don't just stand in awe - they sing - all of creation sings - they press in and they sing day after day - the people of God are a singing people - David, Mary, Jesus, Paul, Silas, Moses, Miriam - they all sang - and when we see Christ we will raise our voices and sing.

Today on Easter Sunday, I dream of a day when we all sing together again. When we sing together, we see and experience the beloved community. We understand that we are not alone. When we sing as a community of faith, we transcend our isolation. A commonwealth of faith is at its best when singing.

All creation sings to the Glory of God. It is what we as creation carriers and creation seers can do as we wait for the new heaven and new earth - we sing.

The coming of the renewed heaven and the renewed earth is what our souls' thirst for. It is the promise that God will renew all things so that there will be no more tears, death, crying or pain that we hang onto.

Friends hear again the good news – God raised Jesus from the dead.

Alleluia! Christ has been raised from the dead!

Every Sunday is a celebration of Easter. Every Sunday is our reminder that in Christ God is renewing and making all things new. As Creation Carriers, who are to make the power and majesty of God known, and Creation Seers, who help us see the wonder of God through loving acts of kindness and justice, every day our song should be:

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen indeed.

Let us sing. Let us live Easter in our hearts. Even as the old creation grinds and labors in anticipation of the renewed creation, let us be those Creation Carriers and Creation Seers that God needs us to be praising God daily in our songs.

I would pray with the Apostle Paul for each one of you from Ephesians 3: 14-19, where Paul says, “I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that God would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to the fullness of God.”

Amen