

Sermon

Who is in Charge?

20th September 2020

Revelation 1:1-8



Who is in control of your life?

Are you? Perhaps it is your bank?

Maybe it's Covid 19?

Maybe it is the demands of your place of work?

Maybe it's Scott Morrison or Annastacia Palaszczuk?

Have you ever wondered, in those moments when life seems random?

Purposeless, spinning out of control, just who really is in control?

It is a question the disciples were confronted with when the Sanhedrin told them not to preach about Jesus resurrection. Who's in control?

It's the question Thomas had to wrestle with when he was confronted by the resurrected Jesus. Just who is in control?

It's the question the Christians struggling under Roman persecution in the latter half of the first century may have asked.

Just who is in control of life, the universe and everything?

That's what we have been discovering in our Thursday morning study of the book of the Revelation.

Read Revelation 1:1-8

So who is in control? The Triune God is in control.

The Revelation tells us that His purposes are being fulfilled no matter what forces oppose his will.

As the old song "Desiderata" said, "Whether or not it is clear to you the universe is unfolding as it should."

God's plan for the universe is to win it back to himself through the life, death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus.

To defeat the axis of evil i.e. sin, death and the devil – is still the business of the day in God's agenda.

What we may see with our physical eyes may sometimes cause us to conclude that life as we know it is the result of random variables.

But the Revelation draws back the curtain to show what is really going on.

Some authors have been confused by the seeming complexities of the Revelation with its weird imagery, coming up with all sorts of fanciful explanations.

To go down that road is to miss the meaning of the book in its entirety.

Actually the purpose of the Revelation is right there in chapter one and verse one; the first five words: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ."

The book is about Jesus. It shows us God's unfolding plan centred on his son.

It tells us that God is in control!

It tells us that his eternal plan has always been to save us and to destroy Satan and those who follow him; those who oppose the rule of God in their lives.

Sometimes life doesn't seem to make much sense.

If we Christians are on the winning side it really doesn't seem that way at times.

So in the Revelation, God invites us to lift our eyes beyond the horizon of this world and focus on Jesus.

God invites us to see our victorious Jesus, the Lion of Judah once slain for our sin, now seated on his throne in heaven.

He is the eternal one. He is the great I AM. He is the one who was, and is, and is to come.

He is the one who has conquered everything that ever opposed God's sovereign rule.

His death on the cross is not a sign of defeat, it is a proclamation of his victory.

In him we are more than conquerors as Paul says in Romans chapter eight.

So who is in control? Jesus of course!

He is the Alpha and the Omega, the A to Z of everything. He is the beginning of all beginnings and the end of all endings.

Of course our lives are full of beginnings and endings.

Some are joyful and some are painful.

Jesus promises in the Revelation that he will be with us in every one of them.

Perhaps you are experiencing a beginning or ending or maybe somewhere in between.

Jesus has promised to be right there with you. He loves you. He is in control.

The book of the Revelation isn't primarily a picture of Armageddon gloom and doom.

The Revelation is a picture of hope and haven for embattled believers.

If you want to get to the heart and soul of the Revelation read chapters four and five when you get home.

The story begins in the throne room where God is ruling supremely over all things.

Compared to the majesty of God his enemies are but a feather in a cyclone.

As our group have been studying the Revelation we have noticed the recurrence of the number seven.

7 Churches

7 Seals

7 Plagues

7 Thunders

7 Trumpets

7 bowls of wrath

One theologian has seen the book like a play with seven acts and seven scenes in each act.

In ancient culture seven was the number of completeness. We still talk about lucky number 7.

The 7 congregations addressed in the opening chapters were real but they are also a paradigm of the whole church; including, by the way, our own Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

The 7 fold Spirit or as other translations have; the seven spirits of God refers to the Holy Spirit.

It is John's graphic way to speak of the full and over flowing presence of God in the believers life.

Yes friends the Triune God is in control, and knowing that is meant to bring us peace.

One more thing before I close, Verse 6 reminds us that we are his priests.

“6 He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father.”

What does that mean for us as we wait patiently for Christ's second coming?

We seldom, if at all, think of ourselves of priests.

Being a Priest of God means that we get to live a life that points to Jesus our High Priest.

We get to proclaim that life is not about me; it is about Jesus.

It's all about his glory and majesty.

The sooner we realise that the more abundant our lives will become.

Just like there is no end to Jesus, there is no end to the ways we can serve him.

As Pastor Mark said last week; “even a smile can become a way to share the love of Jesus with others”.

Here is something you might like to do this week.

Write down the alphabet on a piece of paper, A through Z.

Then using those letters in the form of an acronym have fun writing down ways which you might serve God as you await his second coming.