

(Revelation 7:13-17, NIV84)

Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor 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."

In the section of 1 Corinthians 15 where the Apostle Paul lays out the ramifications for us if, in fact, there is no resurrection of the dead, aside from not having the forgiveness of sin, he says, "Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost" (v. 18). I have often wondered how people who don't know Jesus deal with the loss of a loved one. It has to be the saddest, emptiest, most hopeless feeling. For them death is the end; there is no "blest communion, fellowship divine," no hope of reunion, no ongoing relationships, nothing to look forward to.

As we celebrate Jesus' rising from the dead, along with the blessed assurance that our sins are paid for in full, our souls are redeemed and we have a certain future in heaven, we also have the wonderful confidence that we will be reunited with all who have died in faith. Perish the thought that death is the end. We have a living Lord God who tells us that He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for to Him all are alive (Luke 20:38).

We look forward to seeing all our family members and friends who have fallen asleep in Christ, and we will see them in a place where sin and death and sorrow are nonexistent.

Living in the hope of the resurrection with you in Christ,  
Pastor Golm

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April 18

Reunion in the Father's House

...and so we shall ever be with the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4:17

Someone has said: "Death is not the end, it is the beginning... not a goal, but a gate ... not a tragedy, but a triumph ... not a going away, but a

coming home ... and the sorrow at the departure is more than compensated by the glad welcome on the other side. At the end of a long Christian life, we have more friends and loved ones there than we have here."

Many Christians, particularly those who have already passed the noonday of life, have experienced the truth of that last sentence: "At the end of a long Christian life, we have more friends and loved ones over there than we have here."

The mansions of the Father's house are peopled with the redeemed of all ages, those who have died in the holy faith by which we live. There dwell those whom we "love most and best", our pious fathers who have gone on before us, our believing mothers, our sisters and our brothers.

Oh, the glory of the day when we shall stand beside our loved ones in the Father's house above! What a thrice-happy reunion that will be! Through faith in their atoning Savior, they have come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb". Through faith in the same Savior, we one day shall place our hand in theirs and join them in their eternal hymns of glory in the mansions of the Lord. Surely, the words of the poet are also ours:

Lord, while we pray, we lift our eyes  
To dear ones gone before us,  
Safe home with Thee in Paradise,  
Whose peace descendeth o'er us;  
And beg of Thee, when life is past,  
To reunite us all at last  
With those who've gone before us.

Lord, at this moment we remember our dear ones who have already entered into glory. We pray, keep us firm in faith, that on that great day we may join them and worship You for evermore. Amen.