

## All-age Harvest 11<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015

Revelation 21 v1-4

Matthew 6 v25-33

*A large (clean) bin, a box of tissues, a bottle of tablets, a pair of glasses and a hymn book.*

**BIN** It's unusual to have this in church but it helps to remind me of heaven.

Revelation gives us a glimpse of what heaven will be like, not everything about heaven but lots of reasons to rejoice - especially over some things that are never going to happen again and over some things that we won't need in heaven so will be able to throw away.

**TISSUES** God promises, in heaven, there will be no more tears or sadness, no war or disasters so we won't need to cry anymore. So these tissues can go straight in the bin.

**TABLETS** God promises no more pain or illness so we won't need medicines. This world is unfair because some people, usually the poorest, die from diseases that are curable but they just don't have access to the right medicines. But in heaven there will be no more suffering so we won't need medicines. In the bin.

**GLASSES** We will all be given contact lenses! No, one day we will actually see God face to face. So all the things we don't understand on earth, all the questions about suffering and unfairness, poverty and disaster will be made plain. We won't have to guess or try to make excuses - we will understand God's plans fully, not like a fuzzy image.

**MUSIC BOOK** No more singing! I hope not. We won't need help with what to say or how to pray or worship because we will be in the presence of God and we will know exactly how to talk to Him as our friend and our Lord.

From REVELATION **“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away .... I am making everything new.”**

As Christians, we believe in life after death, eternal life. We have a home to go to which will be perfect - but just for now, Jesus came to show us how to live life on this earth for this time. He lived among us and taught his disciples how to go about making the kingdom of heaven here on earth and the Bible is still with us to help us to continue doing that. We can start to make that kingdom which will be made complete by God and will be everlasting. Jesus said we are the ones responsible for making that kingdom grow.

So, for now we still need these things.

**TISSUES** Wherever we see poverty, it is our responsibility to challenge it and to change the conditions that bring about tears and sadness. That is why, at harvest time, we think about the true needs of the whole world - both close to home and far away.

**TABLETS** And we still need medicines and the skills of doctors and nurses. In parts of the world where there is little or no healthcare, God looks to us to be the people who will fight to change the circumstances so that people don't need to suffer unnecessarily. We must try to give

people the chance to live life to the full. We can support or work for organisations like Christian Aid or Oxfam or Mission Aviation Fellowship....

**GLASSES** We also need to take the glasses out of the bin because there is still so much that we don't understand or can't explain and it's no use pretending that we have all the answers. We don't know the full picture, we see though a glass darkly (1 Cor 13) and all the world's problems are too great, too complex for us to tackle as individuals. So we must campaign together as the Christian family to get politicians to change the way the whole world operates so that people are not trapped in poverty and suffering.

**MUSIC BOOK** And, yes, we still need to try to sing from the same hymn book. Until God brings justice to everyone in the world, there is an awful lot that we need to talk to Him about. This is why harvest time is so important for all of us. It's a time when we can be really grateful for everything that God has given to us but also when we can pray and do things for the world's poorest people.

In John's gospel we read that Jesus said, **'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.'**

We believe in life after death. At harvest time we remember life before death too.