SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: The Midnight Cry and the Rapture of the Church

SERMON REFERENCE: Revelation 4:1-5

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2340

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1) INTRODUCTION
   a) Revelation 4 enters the third grand division in the book of the Revelation: the things which shall be hereafter.
      i) Revelation 1:1
         (1) John was told to write three things:
            (a) Write what you've seen.
                (i) This was a vision of Christ.
            (b) Write about the things which are.
                (i) This is the church age.
                1. This is the time between the first coming of Jesus and His second coming.
                (ii) The church age will end with the rapture of the church.
            (c) Write about the things which shall be hereafter.
                (i) Prophetic things.
   b) The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is called “the blessed hope.”
      i) Sorrow looks back.
      ii) Worry looks all around.
      iii) Hope looks up.
   c) When Jesus Christ comes again, those who are saved and still living will be miraculously transformed, will be given a glorified body, and will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.
      i) The bodies of those who have already died in the Lord will be raised from their graves to meet their spirits in the air and be joined with the Lord.
   d) Revelation 4:1
      i) Beginning with this verse, the book of the Revelation enters into that area that deals with the future.
         (1) The rapture of the church and everything that will transpire after the rapture.

2) WHAT: THE SACRED MYSTERY OF THE RAPTURE (Revelation 4:1)
   a) The Bible calls the rapture of the church a mystery.
      i) A mystery in the Bible is a truth that no one can figure out of his or her own accord, but a truth revealed by divine revelation.
   b) In Revelation 4:1, John is caught up and transported from Earth into Heaven.
      i) This is the rapture of the church.
   c) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
      i) The church in Thessalonica was waiting on Jesus’ return.
      ii) Some of their members had died, and they were concerned that their brethren would miss the coming of the Lord.
          (1) For those who have died in the Lord: the body is in the grave, and the spirit is with the Lord.
          (2) At the rapture, the body will be raised to be reunited with the spirit that comes down with Jesus.
      iii) Paul expected Jesus to come back in his lifetime.
   d) The word used to describe the rapture is the term “caught up.”
i) We get the word “rapture” from the Latin word that means “to seize or to catch away, to be caught up.”
   (1) The Greek word means the same thing.

e) 1 Corinthians 15:51-52
   i) The word “mystery” means something that has been hidden but is now revealed.
   ii) “We shall not all sleep;” meaning not all believers will die before the rapture.
   iii) When Jesus comes again, those who are Heaven-born and Heaven-bound (those who have the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ), will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

f) The rapture is a supernatural event.
   i) If we believe in Jesus’ death and resurrection, why would it be difficult to believe in the rapture?

g) Reasons to believe in the rapture:
   i) We believe the Gospel.
      (1) The Gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
      (2) The rapture is linked to redemption.
         (a) God is not finished.
         (b) You cannot have the incarnation without the coronation.
   ii) We believe it because the Word of God teaches it.
      (1) 1 Thessalonians 4:15

3) WHO: THE SELECT MULTITUDE OF THE RAPTURE (Revelation 4:4)
   a) Not everyone will be caught up with the Lord.
   b) Revelation 4:4
      i) This speaks of the dead in Christ and those who have been transformed.
      ii) Elders are representatives of God’s people, the saints.
         (1) Revelation 5:5
         (2) Revelation 5:11
      iii) Why 24 elders?
         (1) The number 24 represents the rule of God on Earth.
         (2) These elders have been taken from Earth into Heaven.
         (3) These elders represent all who are born again.
      iv) These elders are clothed in white.
         (1) White raiment represents the righteousness that we have in Christ.
   c) Only those who are born again, or saints, will be caught up with the Lord.
      i) Revelation 19:8
      ii) Revelation 4:4
         (1) They received their crowns at the judgment seat of Christ.
   d) Luke 17:34-37
      i) Just as a thief comes to steal away, Jesus Christ is coming.
      ii) Where Jesus is, we are going to be gathered together.
         (1) Those who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus will be left behind.

4) WHEN: THE SECRET MOMENT OF THE RAPTURE (Revelation 4:1-2)
a) John was caught up to Heaven suddenly, immediately. He was not expecting it.
   i) The rapture will happen in the same way.

b) Beginning in Revelation 4, the word “church” is not found throughout the rest of the book.
   i) In chapter 4, the rapture occurs, and the church is caught up to meet the Lord.

c) Only God the Father knows the exact time of the rapture.
   i) Matthew 24:36

d) We are not waiting for a prophecy to be fulfilled before the rapture can take place.
   i) The coming of Jesus is always near.
   ii) Matthew 24:36
   iii) Matthew 24:38
   iv) Matthew 24:42
   v) Matthew 24:44
   vi) 1 Corinthians 15:51-52
      (1) The word “moment” is the word we get our word “atom” from, meaning the smallest indivisible period of time known to them.
   vii) The signs of the times that we see occurring are signs for what will take place after the rapture.
      (1) The rapture is not Jesus coming in great power and glory; it is Him coming for His church before He comes in power and glory.
      (2) The rapture is imminent.

5) WHY: THE MOTIVE OF THE RAPTURE (Revelation 4:2-5)
   a) Revelation 4:2-4
      i) We will sit upon these thrones judging the world, administering His justice.
      ii) If we suffer with Jesus, we will reign with Jesus.
   b) The motive of the rapture is three-fold.
      i) Reception
         (1) John 14:2-3
         (2) Our Lord will come and receive His bride to Himself.
            (a) We will see His majesty.
            (b) We will glorify His ministry.
               (i) Revelation 4:3
               (ii) The jasper mentioned is most likely a clear and translucent diamond (Revelation 21:11), and the sardine stone is blood red in color.
               (iii) These two emblems speak of His purity and blood sacrifice for the church.
         ii) Rescue
            (1) Revelation 4:3, 5
            (a) A rainbow encircles the throne.
            (b) The rainbow is green in color, symbolizing life.
            (c) There are lightnings and thunders indicating a storm is coming; the rainbow means the storm is past.
            (d) The rainbow stands for the covenant God made with His people.
(e) The circle of the rainbow speaks of eternity.
(2) The church is taken out before the Great Tribulation.
(a) 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

iii) Reunion
(1) Revelation 4:4
(a) The elders represent all of those who will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.
(2) 1 Thessalonians 4:17

6) CONCLUSION
a) What does this mean for us?
   i) We should learn of His coming.
      (1) We cannot afford to be ignorant concerning the second coming of Christ.
   ii) We should live for His coming.
   iii) We should look for His coming.
   iv) We should long for His coming.

b) The last prayer in the Bible is for Jesus to come.
   i) Revelation 22:20

c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.

d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
   i) Romans 3:23
   ii) Romans 10:9-10
   iii) Romans 10:13
   iv) Acts 16:31