

Do you enjoy watching the Do-It-Yourself shows on TV? HGTV and the Magnolia Network have lots of them. PBS has *Ask This Old House*. Have you noticed they like to use the term “*Forever Home*” to describe a home they’re building, renovating or remodeling?

What is a “*Forever Home*?” It’s a home where a couple will spend their entire adult life ... from having their children... to watching them grow up ... from experiencing the empty nest ... to having their aging parents move in. One website offers this bit of wisdom: Since a forever home needs to be flexible and adapt with you, here are five things to consider: 1) Safe Location 2) Budget 3) Solid Foundation 4) Interior 5) Room for Expansion.

This “*Forever Home*” concept isn’t unique, or even new. God has been talking about it ever since he created the Garden of Eden.

When Adam and Eve sinned and got evicted from their “*Forever Home*,” God was flexible and adapted. He sent his Son to live the perfect life we sinners couldn’t, and to die the death we sinners deserved. Then he raised him from the dead and welcomed him back home to prepare a “*Forever Home*” for every believer in Jesus.

That’s why God reminds us again and again in his Word that our time here is only temporary. One day we all will leave for a permanent destination. Your relationship with Jesus right now determines whether that permanent place is heaven or hell.

Revelation 21 is Jesus’ whetting your appetite for our “**Forever Home**” ... the place he’s preparing for us as we speak. In today’s lesson, we see that 3 of the 5 items on the list for a Forever Home here, have a lot in common with our Forever Home in heaven: 1) *Safe Location* 2) *Solid Foundation* 3) *Interior*.

If you were building a “*Forever Home*” here, you’d want a **Safe Location**. Many homes have security systems. Some are even in gated communities, so only certain people have access. You can never be

too safe! There’s no such thing as too much security!

Just a reminder, the 22 chapters of Revelation are a dream, a vision God gave the Apostle John. So, the descriptions and measurements aren’t to be taken literally. They’re trying to show how secure and solid, how perfect and beautiful heavenly glory is for those there now and will be for us when we get there.

God carries John to the top of a mountain so he could see what no eyes have ever seen – the Holy City, the new Jerusalem ... heaven, our “*Forever Home*.” The first thing John notices is how safe he is. The walls surrounding the city are 200 feet thick. Now, if the angel’s measurements of those walls are correct, and they are, they form a cube – 1,400 miles long, wide and high. This is a dream. These aren’t an architect’s blueprints or an engineer’s plans.

There was room in Solomon’s Temple that was also a cube, but much smaller – 30 feet by 30 feet by 30 feet. The room was called the Holy of Holies. It was where God lived with his people. Access into God’s presence was restricted to one person, the High Priest, one day a year, the Day of Atonement. In heaven there won’t be any restrictions. We’ll have 24/7 access to God.

John spots more security. There are 3 gates on each side of this city. And there are angels standing guard at each of the 12 gates keeping any intruders out. Big walls! Powerful angels! That’s God’s recipe for a **Safe Location** for those who are in his presence.

So how does one get in? You can’t go around the walls, climb over them or bust through them! You can’t overpower the angels, either!

Wait, something is written on the gates. No, it doesn’t say: “*Pretty good people enter here*,” or “*Church members only*.” It does have the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. Evidently, the only way in is

if you're an Israelite. That's a problem. We're not Jewish. We're Gentiles.

But hold on! In Romans, God calls anyone who believes the promise of the Savior an Israelite. That means we are just like Abraham, the founding father of Israel. And besides, just like you didn't choose to be part of your earthly family, so you can't choose to be part of God's family. God chose you when you were baptized. Only those who believe in Jesus are allowed into heaven's fortified mansions.

Many "Forever Homes" here have security systems. But they may still have issues. Building on a hillside may give you breath-taking views, but heavy rains can cause the ground to slide right out from under you. Building on sand may be easier and less expensive, but in a parable Jesus' warns that winds and rains will sweep you away. A **Solid Foundation** is necessary.

A **Solid Foundation** is what people are searching for in this life, too. We want to make sure that we've saved enough for retirement. We want to make sure that we've got a home to live in. And, while putting in long hours to achieve those goals ... our marriages, our families and our health often pay the price and suffer.

- When health problems appear ... the foundation of "I can take care of myself," crumbles.
- When our parents or grandparents die ... the foundation of family is gone.
- When retirement funds shrink ... our financial foundation disappears.

We need something that lasts, that lasts forever. John sees that kind of foundation in heaven. Actually, he sees 12 foundations. The foundations, like the gates also have 12 names written on them. The names of the 12 apostles. It wasn't those men that made for strong foundations. It was their confession about Jesus ... that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Paul then expanded on that when he wrote: "**No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus.**" Jesus' plan of salvation is as rock solid and

certain as it gets. Compare that to what this world offers? If someone close to you says: "I don't love you anymore, I'm leaving." Jesus wouldn't do that, ever. If someone close to you dies ... Jesus wouldn't do that, ever. If someone lets you down and can't help when you need it most ... Jesus wouldn't do that, ever.

Our "Forever Home" has safety and security and a solid foundation! But what about **Inside**? What did John see when he looked at the **Interior** of our "Forever Home?"

John is surprised by what he doesn't see. He doesn't see a **temple or the sun**. It bothered him there wasn't a temple in heaven. The temple or a church building is the center of the believers' faith life on earth. Then he realized: **the Lord and the Lamb are its temple**. Sacrifices to the Lord aren't needed. The Lamb had already offered it and was alive again, right there. Temples or church buildings aren't needed **Inside** our "Forever Home."

The sun wasn't needed either, because the Lord and the Lamb supply the light. There's no night with them. That means no evil or harm is lurking in the darkness. The sun isn't needed **Inside** our "Forever Home," since the Lord's brightest and best display of his grace and glory is the Lamb, who defeated our enemies: sin, death, Satan, hell.

What else won't be **Inside** our "Forever Home?" Crying. Arguments. Pain. Deadlines. Heartaches. Sin. Disappointment. Sadness. Those are just some of the things we struggle with every day. They bring suffering into our lives, and so we wonder, "Why, God?"

Laura Story is a Christian musician, in her song "Blessings" these words answer our "Why, God?" question. *When friends betray us, when darkness seems to win. We know that pain reminds this heart ... that this is not, this is not our home, it's not our home.*

Our "Forever Home" is waiting for us. It's perfectly safe and secure with a foundation so solid it will last forever. See you there!