

When We All Get To Heaven

February 20, 2005

John 14:1-6 (NKJV)

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. [2] In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. [4] And where I go you know, and the way you know." [5] Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" [6] Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

I want to talk to you today about a place called heaven.

There's a hymn that we used to sing a lot called, "When We All Get To Heaven, What A Day Of Rejoicing That Will Be."

The words to that hymn are.....

1. Sing the wondrous love of Jesus, Sing His mercy and His grace;
In the mansions bright and blessed, He'll prepare for us a place.
2. While we walk the pilgrim pathway, Clouds will overspread the sky
But when traveling days are over, Not a shadow not a sigh.
3. Let us then be true and faithful, Trusting, serving ev'ry day;
Just one glimpse of Him in glory Will the toils of life repay.
4. Onward to the prize before us, Soon His beauty we'll behold;
Soon the pearly gates will open, We shall tread the streets of gold.

Chorus:

When we all get to heaven, What a day of rejoicing that will be!
When we all see Jesus, We'll sing and shout the victory!

Two ninety-five-year-old sisters died at the same time and went to Heaven. There they were overwhelmed by the magnificence and glory of heaven. They ooh-ed and ah-ed at the wonders they saw. They couldn't get over what a matchless place it was. Then one said to the other, "You know, we

could have been here five years earlier if you hadn't insisted on our eating oat bran."

The Bible talks about a place called heaven. Actually, the word "heaven" is used in several ways in the Bible.

1. First, it is used to identify the space that surrounds the earth.

Genesis 1:8 (NKJV)

And God called the firmament Heaven.

Genesis 11:4 (NKJV)

And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens....."

Genesis 1:14 (NKJV)

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night....."

2. It is also used to identify the dwelling place of God.

Rev. 12:7-8 (NKJV)

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, [8] but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.

3. The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God are often used interchangeably in the Bible.

Matthew 4:17 (NKJV)

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Mark 1:15 (NKJV)

and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

4. The Bible talks about a new heaven that will be created to surround the new earth at the end of this dispensation.

Isaiah 65:17 (NKJV)

"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.

Rev. 21:1 (NKJV)

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.

So there are a lot of meanings of the word heaven in the Bible but today I want to talk about heaven as the place that Jesus said He was going away to prepare for us when He said....

John 14:1-3 (NKJV)

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. [2] In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

The Apostle Paul also spoke of a place that God is preparing for us. He said....

1 Cor. 2:9 (NKJV)

...."Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

John the Revelator was given a glimpse of heaven. He said.....

Rev. 4:1-6 (NKJV)

After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven.[2] Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. [3] And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in

appearance like an emerald. [4] Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. [5] And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. [6] Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.

Wow! What a sight that must have been. Heaven is an awesome place.

The promise of Jesus is that there is something which lies beyond this life. God did not create us to simply live for a few years in a body that die and rot in a six-foot hole in the ground. He has something planned for us that will be wonderful beyond our wildest dreams.

Human beings often have a perception problem. We think we have the proper perspective on an issue when in fact we can be way off.

There's a story that Thomas Wheeler, one time CEO of the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (a.k.a. MassMutual), tells on himself:

He says that he and his wife were driving along an interstate highway when he noticed that their car was low on gas. He got off the highway at the next exit and soon found a rundown gas station with just one gas pump. He asked the lone attendant to fill the tank and check the oil, then went for a little walk around the station to stretch his legs.

As he was returning to the car, he noticed that the attendant and his wife were engaged in an animated conversation. The conversation stopped as he paid the attendant. But as he was getting back into the car, he saw the attendant wave and heard him say, "It was great talking to you."

As they drove out of the station, Wheeler asked his wife if she knew the man. She readily admitted she did. They had gone to high school together and had dated steadily for about a year.

"Boy, were you lucky that I came along," bragged Wheeler.

"If you had married him, you'd be the wife of a gas station attendant instead of the wife of a chief executive officer."

"My dear," replied his wife, "if I had married him, he'd be the chief executive officer and you'd be the gas station attendant."

I think a lot of people have a misconception of heaven. The Bible uses a lot of beautiful poetry to describe heaven. It speaks of pearly gates. It talks about Gabriel blowing his horn. It speaks of angels darting about with six wings. It speaks of heavenly choirs made up of the redeemed singing around the throne and praising God all day long. And we read those descriptions and picture it in our minds and come up with a conception of heaven that is not realistic.

Because if that's all there is to heaven, I'm afraid it would become a very boring place. A heaven where there is nothing to do but sing hymns and walk the streets of gold, and flutter around with angel wings would not be very appealing.

There is an old story about a man who complained that he had too much work to do. He never seemed to be caught up. Every day for twenty years he looked at his desk piled high with unfinished projects ... letters to be answered ... bills to be paid ... and problems to be solved. When he walked out of the house to get away from the clutter, he saw the grass that needed to be cut and the hedges that needed to be trimmed. If he could only get caught up, just once, he thought that would be heaven.

One night he dreamed that he was in a large room with a beautiful mahogany desk before him. The desk was clean ... and bright ... and shiny. There were no letters or bills or problems waiting to be solved. Through the window he could see the lawn freshly mowed and the hedges meticulously manicured. It was a great relief. He had caught up at last and now he could enjoy some peace and quiet.

But, now he had nothing to do - nothing but to sit and stare out the window. As he was staring out the window, he noticed a postman walking down the street - but there were no letters in his bag. He called out to the postman and said, "I see you don't have anything to do either?"

"Nope," the postman said, "not a thing."

"I don't know," the man said, "if I like a heaven where there's nothing to do."

"Don't you know?" the postman asked. "This isn't heaven, my friend, this is hell!"

There was nothing to do and it was hell to him.

If you have a concept of heaven as a place where you will do nothing you have the wrong perception.

Remember the scripture that we have quoted over and over for the past few weeks.

Matthew 25:21 (NKJV)

His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

The Lord didn't say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, now go and do nothing."

He said, "you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord."

Luke 19:17 (NKJV) Luke records it this way....

And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, **have authority over ten cities.**'

Heaven is going to be a place where there will be continual growth and development. A place where we will reach the ultimate use and fulfillment of the gifts that God has given to us.

From my understanding of scripture, when a Christian dies, his or her body go back to the dust from which it was created.

Paul said that our earthly bodies are only temporary.

2 Cor. 4:16 (NKJV)

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

James 4:14 (NKJV)For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

I believe the reason that there is so much depression, stress and anxiety among Christians today is because there is so much emphasis on earthly things and on the flesh. We have lost our focus on eternal things.

Paul said.....

1 Cor. 15:19 (NKJV)

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

Why? Because our earthly bodies are temporary. Paul calls them tents. Our physical bodies are perishing. They will eventually die and return to dirt. The same is true of all material things.

That new car; that new house; that new computer; that new boat; all of the things that we work so hard to get are temporary. They will get old and wear out. And if your focus is on those things you will be disappointed and discouraged and depressed.

But if you keep your focus on eternal things your life will take on a new and significant meaning. You will not be so focused on treasures here on earth but you will be thinking about treasures in heaven.

You will heed the words of Jesus who said....

Matthew 6:19-21 (NKJV)

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; [20] but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves

do not break in and steal. [21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

When a Christian dies the outward man, his earthly body, perishes and is buried in the grave. But the inward man, his spirit that is being renewed day by day, departs to be with Christ and remains there until the resurrection.

One day, Jesus is coming back to this earth and He is going to bring with Him all those Christians who have died and gone to be with Him.

Listen to the words of Paul again....

1 Thes. 4:13-17 (NKJV)

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. [14] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, **even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.** [15] For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. [16] For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

1 Cor. 15:51-52 (NKJV)

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- [52] in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Jesus is coming back to this earth! He's going to bring with Him all those who have died while serving Him. He's going to resurrect their bodies and give them brand new eternal bodies that will never grow old.

1 Cor. 15:42-44 (NKJV)

So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. [43] It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. [44] It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

Rev. 20:6 (NKJV) says.....

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

That same chapter tells us that after the thousand years of us reigning with Christ on the earth Satan will be released from his prison for a season and then God will cast him into the lake of fire where he will remain forever.

After that, John says.....

Rev. 21:1-3 (NKJV)

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. [2] Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. [3] And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

I am telling you that God has so much prepared for us. A thousand years of ruling and reigning with Him here on this earth, and then He's going to create a brand new heaven and a brand new earth where who knows what He has planned. But we know it will be an awesome place.

It's only for those who receive Christ as their Savior and make Him the Lord of their lives.

Have you done that? Is your name written in the Book of Life?

You see everyone is not going to heaven.....

Rev. 20:15 (NKJV)

And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Is your name written in the Book of Life?

God writes your name down in the Book of Life when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior.

Give invitation!

