

What is Heaven?

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[0:00] The Sermon on the Mount is all about the kingdom. And it's preached by the king of this kingdom.! So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets to be honored by men.

I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

So that your giving may be in secret. Then your father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your father who is unseen. Then your father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

[1:32] And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans. For they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. For your father knows what you need before you ask him.

This then is how you should pray. Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your father will not forgive your sins.

When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do. For they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

[2:43] But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your father who is unseen, and your father who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light.

But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness? No one can serve two masters.

Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear.

[4:07] Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or store away in barns.

And yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you, by worrying, can add a single hour to his life?

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon, in all his splendor, was dressed like one of these.

If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

So do not worry, saying, what shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or what shall we wear? For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

[5 : 15] But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.

Each day has enough trouble of its own. Amen. I ask you to keep your Bibles open there to the Gospel of Matthew in chapter 6.

We won't get there for a little bit, but we'll eventually arrive there. If you ask someone what they think heaven is, you're likely to get a broad variety of answers.

It's where God lives. It's where we go when we die. It's where my pet kitty went when she died. It's where the angels are.

It's where we don't have any more trouble, or trials, or difficulties. Different people think of different things when they think of heaven. And if you ask someone what they think heaven will be like, once you get there, you're likely to get an equally broad variety of answers.

[6 : 28] There are extremes. Some people think that heaven will be like an extended, an eternally extended church service, where we sit around the throne and worship.

For others, on the other extreme, I'll quote what was once a popular song, and I think it's still known today, at least it was known in my day, come and go with me to my father's house.

It's a big, big house with lots and lots of room. So far, fairly accurate. It's a big, big table with lots and lots of food. A big, big yard where we can play football.

A big, big house. It's my father's house. That's some people's perception of heaven. For others who are even less theologically inclined, that's possible.

It's a big lake where you can fish forever. For others, it's an endless golf course. For others, it's floating around on puffy clouds with harps and having wings like angels.

[7 : 44] But what is heaven really like? That's an important question, but it seems to me there's a more fundamental question, and that is, what is heaven? The first question we asked.

And so tonight, and Lord willing, next week we want to consider those questions. Tonight, what is heaven? What is heaven? And Lord willing, next Sunday morning probably, what is heaven like? And then, next Sunday evening, we'll probably take a look at how can you get there? Alright, so what is heaven? What is heaven like?

And how can you get there? Tonight, what is heaven? Before we dive into answering these questions, just a few introductory comments.

The Bible uses the word heaven in different ways. Sometimes when it uses the word heaven, it's talking about the sky. The place where the birds fly and the place where the rain falls from.

[8 : 41] The rain falls from the heavens. The snow falls from the heavens. And the birds fly in the heavens. Sometimes it's talking about the place above the heavens. What we think of as space. The rest of the universe.

It's where the stars are hung. Where the moon and the sun are. They're hung in the heavens. The sun runs its course from one end of the heavens to the other end of the heavens.

The heavens declare the glory of God. That's not the heaven that we're talking about tonight. We're talking about the place that is God's dwelling place.

The place as people go after they die. And just in saying that, I've already begun to answer the question of what is heaven? And then, often much of what is said about heaven is said by way of speculation or imagination.

People like to imagine what it will be like and then they give you their best guess at it. I'm going to make every effort to avoid all sorts of speculation in these messages, these three or so messages on heaven.

[9 : 44] I simply want to give you what the Scriptures say about heaven. One author I read said this, which I found very helpful. The Bible does not set out to answer all our questions.

The purpose of such teaching as Scripture gives is not to satisfy our curiosity, but to support our faith. The Bible doesn't tell us everything we would like to know about heaven.

And there's a lot that I would like to know about heaven. And one day, anticipate finding out. But the Bible doesn't tell us all of those things. It tells us what we need to know to build our faith, to strengthen us, and to prepare us for heaven.

And so we take what God has given us in His Word with gratitude in our hearts. We thank Him. We praise Him for it. And we trust as we look at this subject of heaven that God will strengthen our faith,

that He will build our faith in considering what His Word has to teach us about heaven. So what is it then? What is heaven? Four things tonight. First of all, heaven is the place where God dwells. I'm not going to tell you anything new tonight.

[10:52] Nothing earth-shattering. Nothing shocking tonight. Heaven is the place where God dwells. Heaven is frequently described as the throne of God or His holy dwelling place.

And I'm going to read a lot of passages tonight. Don't feel like you need to turn to them all. Like I say, we'll eventually get to Matthew chapter 6. But just hear some of these. Psalm 11 and verse 4. The Lord is in His holy temple.

The Lord is on His heavenly throne. God's throne is in heaven. Or in 2 Chronicles 30 and verse 27, when Judah celebrates the Passover, they hadn't observed the feast for a long time.

And then under King Hezekiah, some of these things were brought back. And they brought back the celebration of the Passover. And some came from the northern kingdom down to celebrate. And we read this, the priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them for their prayer reached heaven, His holy dwelling place.

Heaven is the place where God lives. It's His holy dwelling place. And so when we pray, Matthew 6 and verse 9, we pray to our Father in heaven. Verse 9, This then is how you should pray our Father in heaven.

[12:04] Hallowed be your name. When our prayers are heard by God, which is whenever we pray through the merits of Christ, they are heard in heaven, where God lives. Now we should note that God can't be contained to one particular place.

And one of the things that we're going to see is heaven is a real physical place. It's not just a state of mind. It's not some spiritual idea that's out there. Heaven is a real physical place.

And God cannot be confined to one place. When the catechism asks, where is God? And it says, the answer is, God is everywhere. It's exactly right. And Solomon acknowledged that when he built a temple for God on the earth.

And he prayed when he dedicated that temple. And he says in 1 Kings 8, 27, But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you.

How much less this temple I've built. So God indeed is everywhere. But in a special sense, His presence is in heaven, though He is everywhere. Heaven is where His glory is most clearly displayed.

[13:05] Everything that God has made. All things. Us, the world we see around us, and heaven was made for God's glory. And heaven certainly exists for the glory of God.

And unlike the earth, it remains untainted by sin. No sin can be tolerated there. Nothing sinful can enter there. And so it's unblemished glory in heaven.

Because it's where God displays His glory most clearly. And that's important for us self-centered folks to remember right at the beginning. That heaven exists for the glory of God.

Heaven is not there primarily for my good, for my reward. We often think of heavens in terms of us. I can't wait to get to heaven because then I won't have to deal with all of these things.

I won't have any more problems. Heaven is for me. And it is those things. And we'll see that as we go. But primarily, most importantly, heaven exists to give glory to God.

[14:04] And our good is a secondary thing about heaven. And so, the first thing we see about what heaven is, is it is God's dwelling place.

And wherever God is, His glory is. And so, it is a glorious place. Heaven is where God dwells.

Secondly, heaven is the place where angels dwell. And we won't spend long here.

This is clear throughout the Scriptures. When the angels come to make their announcement of Jesus' birth to the shepherds, we read, after they make that announcement, when the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, let's go to Bethlehem.

And what were those angels called? Just a few verses earlier, Luke 2 and verse 13. Suddenly, a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel praising God. We're not going to focus on this during our study of heaven, but it's clear in the Scriptures.

We need to note it. This is something that's true about heaven. It's where the angels dwell. Alright? So, it's where God dwells. It's where the angels dwell. Thirdly, heaven is the place where Jesus came from and to which He returned and from where He's coming again.

[15:14] Alright? Jesus came from heaven. He went back to heaven and He's going to come again from heaven. He came from heaven. That's where He dwelt with His Father in glory before coming

to the earth.

When Jesus talks to Nicodemus, He says in John 3.13, No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven, the Son of Man. And He's talking about Himself.

Saying, I came from heaven. He calls Himself the bread of life, the bread of God. And He says in John 6.33, For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

But not only is it where Jesus came from, it's where He went back to. It's a poor sentence. You're not supposed to end with a preposition. But anyway, it's the place to which He returned.

Luke 24 and verse 51, after His resurrection that we've considered today. And He's appeared to His disciples. We read, While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven.

[16 : 18] Jesus, in His resurrection body, was taken up into glory where He now sits at the right hand of God. You notice I called it glory there. He was taken up into glory.

That's used synonymously sometimes with heaven. We talk about saints who have gone on to glory. The Son of Man being received back into glory. And we'll see that that's a scriptural concept, but it makes sense since that's where God dwells.

And it is such a glorious place that we call it glory. But Jesus went back into glory where He's now at the right hand of God the Father, even as we've already mentioned tonight in our worship service.

But heaven is also the place from which Jesus will return. Paul, when he's writing to the Thessalonians, he's heard a good report about them and he writes in 1 Thessalonians 1, verses 9 and 10, They tell us how you turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

And so it is for us who are here to be anticipating the return of Christ from heaven. And so that's the third thing about heaven. It's the place where Jesus dwells.

[17 : 31] He came from there, He returned there, and He's coming again from heaven. And fourthly, and the last thing that we'll note about heaven tonight, is that it is a place of reward for God's children.

It is where God's people dwell, where they will dwell, or where they already are dwelling. It's where you can expect to go when you die, if you're one of God's children.

You can expect to go to heaven, which is to be in the presence of God, to be in the presence of our risen Savior. The only other alternative is for those who are not God's children.

And if you die, and you're not one of God's children, then you go to hell, which is eternal punishment and torment. There is no other option. There's no in between. There's no purgatory where you can work your way a little bit more towards heaven.

No, it's heaven or hell, one or the other. And heaven is the place where God's people can expect to go when they die. It's the great reward of God's people. It's been thus for previous saints.

[18 : 36] It's recorded for us in the pages of Scripture. And it's one of the reasons we have confident hope and expectation that we will go there when we die. It was true of Elijah.

2 Kings 2. Now, Elijah got there a little bit differently than the rest of us. Elijah didn't die, but we read in 2 Kings 2, verses 1 and 11, when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal.

As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

Now, he was taken. His life on earth was done and God took him home without dying, but where did he go? He went to heaven. When Jesus tells the story about the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man, when he dies, endures the torments of hell while Lazarus is carried to Abraham's bosom, to Abraham's side, a clear reference to heaven.

When Jesus talks to the thief on the cross, Luke 23, in verse 43, Jesus answered him, I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.

[19 : 48] Another word for heaven. That's where God's people go when they die. Stephen, the first martyr in the church, he's given his testimony, and they've taken up stones to throw at him.

And before they begin stoning him, Stephen looks up to heaven. And what does he see? It's a glorious sight. He sees the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God and then prays, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

And we have every reason to believe that that prayer was answered. And Stephen is received up into glory, into heaven, which he saw just before he died. The book of Revelation pictures the saints who have gone before, the saints who have died in the Lord, as in the presence of God and the Lamb around the throne worshipping.

In Revelation 6, verse 9, and Revelation 7, in verse 9. And so, heaven is the place of reward for God's children. And it will be this for us who are God's children.

It is our true home. You know, we live on earth. We're citizens of the United States of America. But we're citizens of a far greater kingdom. Citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

[21:07] Paul says in Philippians 3, in verse 20, but our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. Heaven is where we're going.

When Jesus spoke to his disciples, he said, in my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you. I'm going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Where is Jesus? He's in heaven. And he's preparing a place for us to go and to be with him in glory in his Father's house. Heaven is where our glorious inheritance awaits us.

Peter writes in 1 Peter 1, verses 3 and 4. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade, kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Our inheritance is waiting for us in heaven. An inheritance that's been earned for us by the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so, four truths about heaven.

[22:35] It is the dwelling place of God. It's the dwelling place of the angels. It's the dwelling place of Christ. And it is the dwelling place, the eternal home of God's children.

And you say, four things about heaven? We're through four things. That's about twenty minutes.

That's a record for him. We're not done. We'd be remiss if we didn't take these truths about heaven and see how they should be relevant in our lives.

And how the truth about heaven should affect the way we live on this earth as we're on our way toward heaven. And so, we want to spend the rest of our time tonight seeing the implications of these truths.

Why it matters to us. Why it's important. How it should affect the way we live. And the first thing is just really to set us up for next week in some ways.

More of a, just an implication from what we've said. And that is that heaven is a real physical place. I know I'm repeating myself, but it's not a state of mind.

[23:42] It's not just a spiritual concept that's out there. It is a real place. If Jesus went up into heaven in a real physical resurrection body, then he had to go somewhere to a real physical place.

And he went to heaven. It is a place. And it's a glorious place where God's presence is. But anyway, we'll get there more next week. But just note that it's a real place. It's not just a state of mind.

And now some applications from these truths. First of all, when we pray to God, we pray to God who is in heaven. When we pray, our prayers do not stop at the ceiling.

Our prayers are heard by God in the very court of heaven. Listen to Solomon. Remember, when he dedicated the temple, he talked about how heaven couldn't contain God. But listen to what he says in 1 Kings 8 and verse 30.

Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray towards this place. Hear from heaven your dwelling place and when you hear, forgive.

[24:48] You see, when we pray, when we seek forgiveness, we're seeking it in the court of heaven because that is where God dwells. And what a blessing. We can do this from anywhere.

We don't have to come to a temple. We don't have to pray towards a particular place. You can be in your home. You can be driving down the road in your car. I wouldn't recommend closing your eyes when you're doing that. But you can be anywhere and you can pray and you can be heard in the court of heaven.

A lot of times heaven seems to be a very distant thing to us because we've never seen it. And we don't know as much about it as we like. But heaven is as near as your next breath of a prayer to God.

And the reason we can be heard in heaven is because of what Paul says in Romans 8, 34. Who is he that contends? Christ Jesus who died. More than that, who is raised to life is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

It's in heaven where Jesus is doing his work as intercessor for us. It's there that he sits at the right hand of God. It's there that he pleads for us before the throne.

[25 : 56] And so our prayers are heard in heaven. Can you imagine this? God in heaven, wherever heaven is, God sits on his throne and he hears our prayers. And it's not as though we just pray one at a time.

You know, there's people all over the world. You're not the only person praying when you're praying. God is hearing thousands and perhaps millions of prayers all at once in the court of heaven.

Now, I get confused when I try to listen to both of my sons talk at the same time and maybe my wife and then you add in her sisters and their kids to the mix and I'm lost trying to process all of that.

But God is not at a loss. He sits on his throne in heaven and he hears our prayers and he answers every one of them according to his good and perfect will.

Not always according to the way we want them answered. No is an answer too. But he hears every one of those prayers in heaven and he answers. You are but a breath away from heaven.

[26 : 59] You just utter a prayer and your voice is heard in the court of heaven. A second point of application is that our only hope comes from our God who is in heaven.

Listen to how the psalmist puts it in Psalm 73 verses 24 and 25. You guide me with your counsel and afterwards you will take me into glory.

You see how the scriptures talk about heaven is glory. Afterwards you take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

And so God after guiding us safely through this life takes us to heaven and we say with the psalmist whom have I in heaven but you? God who is in heaven is our only hope.

It is he who sent his son to accomplish our redemption. It is he who gives us the treasured Holy Spirit to dwell in us and to guide us through this life. It is he who will bring us safely home.

[27 : 56] He is our only hope. The God who dwells in heaven. We will speak of this at greater length when we talk about how you can go there. How you can get to heaven. A third implication of these truths for our lives.

It is very simply this. Hold your tongue. You say where do you get that? Oh listen to the wise man in Ecclesiastes chapter 5 and verse 2.

Do not be quick with your mouth. Do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth so let your words be few.

We tend to like the sound of our own voices and we tend to spout off without thinking and often our words are many and they're not few and we're hasty.

We want everybody else to know what we think. What our opinion is. What our great wisdom on the subject is. Because we're lofty and exalted in our own minds.

[29 : 03] We exalt ourselves above others and even though we never actually say this sometimes even above God. But before we cut loose the flow of words from our tongue we should stop for a moment says the wise man and think about this.

God is in heaven and you're on the earth. Your wisdom can't compare to his. Your best thought can't compare to the least of God's thoughts.

God's in heaven and I'm on the earth so my wisdom isn't so grand then is it. I have a very limited perspective on things from down here. I can only see what's going on immediately around me and in my time frame and in my point of reference but God God sits outside of time and in heaven where he sees all things perfectly and knows all things.

And so who am I to open my mouth and spout out my own wisdom when God is exalted in heaven. He is truly exalted and so my self-exaltation just goes to show how foolish I am.

He is high and I am low. God is in heaven. You're on the earth and so let your words be few.

Another application of this truth Paul tells the Ephesians and the Colossians and that is to treat others well to treat them fairly.

[30 : 30] Colossians 4 and verse 1 masters provide your slaves with what is right and fair because you know that you also have a master in heaven. You can see similarly in Ephesians chapter 6.

Those in authority are to treat those under them with fairness and remembering our master in heaven will remind us of this. Whether parents dealing with their children or a government dealing with its subjects or employees or employers dealing with their employees.

Those in authority are to remember that they're in authority. Yes, but they're under a far greater authority whose eye is always upon them and so are to treat them with justness and fairness. That's living your life in the recognition that there's something much more than just this earth. There's a God in heaven watching over us and keeping us.

And that leads us to our next point. And that is that God is watching. He's watching from heaven. He sees everything that we do again.

[31 : 37] The psalmist, we've already read part of Psalm 11 in verse 4. We'll repeat that and then read the rest of the verse. The Lord is in his holy temple. The Lord is on his heavenly throne.

His he observes the sons of men. His eyes examine them. God sits on the throne and he's not an oblivious king who doesn't know what's going on in his kingdom and he's delegated all of his authority to other people who he never listens to.

God is not a king that's removed from his kingdom. God knows everything that goes on in this world. He sits on his throne and he watches each one of you.

Remember, he's on his throne in heaven, but he's everywhere. And so he sees everything that you do. Everything. Nothing accepted.

Can you see God? And the answer is no, I cannot see God, but he always sees me.

[32 : 41] When you're alone and no other person knows what you're thinking or doing, God knows what you're thinking. God sees what you're doing.

Kids, you know that when your mom and dad can't see you and they don't know what you've done, you make a plan so that they'll never know what you've done.

You get caught up in that that chain of lies that we we heard of this morning where you have to lie to cover up the lie to cover up the next lie. Even if your parents were to never find out.

God knows. God has seen. Your behavior should be like your parents, your teacher, your boss, your spouse, your accountability partner, like that person is never out of the room because your ultimate boss and the one before whom you are accountable is never out of the room.

He's always there. He sits on his throne and he sees everything that you do and that should move us to a life of holiness, a life lived in accordance with the word of God.

[33 : 53] Everything we do, he sees from his throne in heaven. God is watching. Another way the truth of heaven should affect the way we live.

It should cause us to rejoice for one thing and to live in great anticipation of what is coming. Luke 10 and verse 20, Jesus says to his disciples, however, do not rejoice that the spirit submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

If you're a child of God, your name is written in heaven. It's in the book of life. You're on your way to glory. And Jesus says that's reason to rejoice. That's reason to give thanks.

That's reason to praise your father who is in heaven. A great reward is waiting for you. Next week, we're going to talk about just how great and glorious it will be when we talk about what heaven is like.

But just from what we've talked about so far, you can get a glimpse. It's where God is. And so it must be a holy place. Because no sin is tolerated there.

[34 : 59] And that means there will be no more sin. No more temptation. No more struggle with sin. Glorious day that will be. I rejoice that that's coming. Oh, I anticipate it.

We must long for it and look forward to it. It's there that we receive our inheritance earned for us by the work of Christ. There we see our Savior face to face and become like him.

It's there that we lay aside the trouble and pain and trial and suffering and burdens that have weighed us down in this life. It's there that we gain the perspective that our affliction was momentary and light in the in light of the surpassing weight of the eternal glory.

that we then will behold. Now we live in a world where God is not honored, where he's not glorified as he deserved. What a blessed thought to think of entering his presence where he is worshipped as he deserves, where he is glorified as is due him.

What a blessed thought. And so it ought to cause us to rejoice and to anticipate it, to look forward to it, to long for it. But if the thought of no sin and being in the presence of a holy God is a disappointing thought for you, then you need to ask yourself, what are you looking forward to?

[36:19] I don't like the thought of a place where there's no sin, no temptation, and it's all about the glory of God. Well, what are you looking forward to? What's the point of your life? By God's grace, I can say tonight that I know where I'm headed, and I can't wait to get there.

And it's a goal worth aiming for. But what of you who are not trusting in Christ tonight? What's your aim? What's your goal? Well, I want to make a lot of money. I'd like to be able to retire early.

I want a successful business. I'd like to be popular. I'd like to be well thought of. I'd like to be approved of by my peers. I'd like to have the eye of the opposite sex admire me.

I'm aiming for these things. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm looking long term. What are you looking for long term? Well, that's it. Money, success, approval, popularity.

If that's all that you're aiming for, if that's all that your goal in life is, then you're aiming for hell. Your short-sightedness will land you in eternal fires of torment forever.

[37:29] You're headed to nowhere. You have no end goal, no end purpose. One day, Jesus is going to return from heaven as judge over all. And some will be found on his right hand and called into his presence.

And that's what we're longing for. But those who have not put their hope and trust in this glorious Christ will be sent away into the outer darkness where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And you'll be found wanting when you stand before Christ in that day. But if you run to Christ now, if you come and trust in Jesus now, you can have this heaven that we're talking about.

And the Lord will put a desire in your heart for it. It will be something glorious that you do long for.

You'll have something to aim for, something to anticipate. And so come and rest in the glorious Savior Christ tonight that you might have heaven as your goal.

And finally tonight, a question. You claim to be a child of God tonight, a follower, on your way to heaven. What are you living for?

[38:40] What are you living for? Can you genuinely, can you truthfully say, earth has nothing I desire besides you? And here we begin to feel the rub of it a bit.

Our citizenship is in heaven. Our Father is in heaven. And that should influence and affect everything about the way that we live. Paul even says to the Ephesians, Even now you're seated in the heavenly places with Christ.

In Christ. And that's true in Jesus. And we come now to Matthew chapter 6. And Jesus is talking in the Sermon on the Mount about kingdom life.

He said the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent and believe for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And he's talking about what the life of a kingdom citizen should look like in the Sermon on the Mount.

Are you a citizen of the kingdom of heaven? And here's what your life should look like. And he begins, and we're just going to look at parts of chapter 6 here.

[39:44] And he starts in verse 1. Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men. To be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

Our citizenship is in heaven. Our Father is in heaven. Everything we do should be oriented, should be aimed towards heaven.

And so Jesus says, Every act of righteousness, if it's an act of compassion, giving alms to the poor, you don't do it for the praise of men. You don't do something kind for someone, and then go tell everyone else what you did.

But you know what I did for so and so. I was able, you know, we had a little extra this month, and I was able to help them out. Well, you're doing it for the praise of men, and Jesus says you'll get your reward in full, but that ought not to be your aim, but rather to do it in secret.

And your Father in heaven, remember He's in heaven. And we talked about how He sees everything, the bad things that you do, but He sees the good that you do as well. And you'll be rewarded by your Father who is in heaven.

[40:53] And so when you do something kind for someone, do it with an eye only to God, and not looking for the praises of men. And Jesus works that out other ways. When you pray, don't pray so that others will think you're so righteous and holy.

Pray in secret to your Father who is in heaven. And if you do have a legitimate opportunity to pray, in public, don't do it to impress others. Your audience is God, and from Him comes your reward.

The same is true of fasting, or any other good deed. Maybe nobody has ever noticed the things that you do for this church. They're not highly visible things, and so nobody ever thanks you.

Nobody ever praises you for what you've done. Good. Good. Good. Because your Father who sees in secret will reward you. It's hard for us to wrap our minds around that, because we look around, and what do we see?

We see other people. And so we want to please other people. We want the praise of other people. But a heavenly-minded one will always remember their Father who is in heaven, and be living before His eye, and not for the eyes of men.

[42:02] What are you living for? The eyes of men are the eyes of your Father who is in heaven. What are you living for? The age to come, or this age?

Listen to what Jesus says in verses 19 and 20 of Matthew chapter 6. Do not store up for yourself treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

We're to live like we're citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Yes, we live on this earth, and we must function in this world. We're to be living in the world, to not be of it.

And we're to seek the well-being of the place where we live. And that's going to involve doing things in this world, and living in this world. But this world isn't your home.

[43:08] This world ain't my home. I'm just a passing through. Is that the way that we live? What's more important to you?

Living in a way that honors Christ, and so extends His kingdom, or extending the size of your TV? Seeing sinners saved, or saving money? Seeing how high you can score on your video games, or seeing how highly others think of Christ because of the way you live?

Seeing how low you can get your golf score, or seeing how low Satan's kingdom is brought because of your faithful witness and testimony?

What's more important? How much time you put in at the gym, or how much time you spend in the Word, and in prayer? What are you living for?

[44:13] Did I say there's anything wrong with big TVs, saving money, high video game scores, low golf scores, or time at the gym?

No. Nothing wrong with those things. But if they are your goal, if they are what you're living for, if they are your chief pursuit in this life, and you'll be able to tell by what's in your heart, and others will be able to tell by watching you what's really important to you, it's a matter of perspective.

Where is your treasure? Remember, you're headed towards heaven, living your life inside of your Father who is in heaven, and so the heavenly things, the things of the kingdom of heaven, should be of the utmost importance to us.

People should be able to look at us, and see what is most important, and that will tell us much about our eternal destiny. What are you living for? What do others see when they look at your life? What do you see when you look at your own heart?

What consumes you? Where is your treasure? You're a kingdom citizen? Then your treasure should be in heaven. But sadly, often the opposite is true.

[45:21] We get so caught up in the comforts that this world offers, that heaven loses its importance to us. If you want to read some good material on heaven and hell, I'd recommend a book by Edward Donnelly, taken from a series of sermons he preached on heaven and hell.

The title of the book is the same. I think it might even be on our book rack in the back. But he talks about reasons why heaven is no longer really something we think about very much, something that's not very important to us.

And one of the reasons he gives is that we're preoccupied by the present world is very concrete, tangible. We look about ourselves and we're consumed with the things around us. In heaven, we don't see and don't think about it.

It fades in importance. But another thing that he says is that we're too comfortable in this world. And he says this, The very comfort of this world makes heaven less inviting.

And that is tragic, but I fear that it is true. The very comfort of this world makes heaven less inviting. We like our lives. We like the things that we have here.

[46:27] And there's nothing wrong with enjoying the good gifts that God has given to us. But if we get to the point where we say, You know what? I really would like to extend my time here on this earth because heaven really doesn't seem that grand to me.

I'm pretty content here. I'm pretty happy here. That is Satan deceiving us into thinking that a sinful world could be better than a holy heaven. And so if the world begins to see in us that heaven isn't very important, isn't very important to us, it won't be important to them.

You can tell them you're living for the world to come, but if your life says otherwise, it will destroy your witness. We hear sometimes of people being so heavenly minded that they're of no earthly good.

I think that's pretty rare. I think too often the truth is that we're so earthly minded, we're of no heavenly good. And so as we were encouraged, even as we opened the service, we need to set our minds and our hearts on the things above and not on the things below.

Where is your treasure? What are you living for? And one last thing Jesus says about kingdom oriented living here in Matthew chapter six, heavenly minded living is life without worry.

[48:00] If you're focused on God's kingdom, if you're seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness, then you know that all these other things will be added to you.

And so the conclusion, don't worry about tomorrow. Don't worry. For tomorrow will worry about itself. You know, if you're focused on the things of this world, then when you don't have them, you start to worry.

And when you're not sure if you're going to have them next month, you start to worry. And when you're so consumed with the things about this world, that just breeds worry.

But Jesus says, if you're heavenly minded, if you're focused on the kingdom that is yet to come, or the kingdom that has already come and is coming and will come in fullness when Jesus comes again, if you're focused on heaven, then the things of earth, as the song says, will go strangely dim. And if you're not focused on those things, then you'll have no occasion to worry about them. And so heavenly living is worry free living.

[49:07] And so there's another indicator for us, whether our focus is in the right place on heaven, where we're headed, or on this earth that is just a temporary home for us.

And so we see tonight that heavenly living on the earth will be prayerful. It will be hopeful. It will be controlled, tongued. It will be rejoicing.

It will be anticipating. It will be holy. It will be for the eyes of God and not the praise of men. It will be kingdom focused, and it will be worry free.

That's what heaven does for us. And so I need a bigger dose of heaven. I need to think about it more. And we want to do that next week and think more of what it's like and see more of the glory of being in the presence of God.

God, the more heavenly minded you are, the greater good you'll be able to do on this earth. And so may it be our prayer that God would make us a more heavenly minded people, that we might live as citizens of the kingdom of heaven, that it might be clear to everyone who lives on this earth that this world isn't our home, that we're headed to our eternal home.

[50:26] And so may God make it so in our hearts and in our lives. Let's join our hearts together as we pray. Our Father, we thank you that you are faithful, that you have promised to bring your children safely home to heaven.

And we pray that we would live our lives each day in the light of the glory of heaven. We pray that we wouldn't be so caught up with this world and the things that this world dangles before us and tempts us with, that we would lose sight of the glory which is to come.

We pray that you would make us a heavenly minded people, that we would be a people who are laying up treasure in heaven and not on the earth. We pray that you would cause us to be consumed, not with what other people think of us, but with what you think, with your eye upon us. And so we pray that you would help us to live our lives in the light of the truth of heaven, that it is the place where you dwell, where you are enthroned over all, where you sit and you look down upon the kingdom of men, and you see all that we do.

And so we pray that any who are not trusting in Christ and so on their way to heaven, that you would draw them in, cause them to see the glory of heaven, the glory of Christ, who is the light of heaven, and to be drawn to him as their Savior and Lord.

[51:46] Do a work in our midst and save us. And we thank you that as we finish with prayer tonight, that our prayer is heard in the very court of heaven. We thank you that you hear us, that you answer us.

We thank you for Jesus who sits at your right hand, interceding for us. We thank you for heaven and the anticipation of it.

Give us grace to go from here living in the light of it, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling, to present you glorious before the presence of his glory, with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time, and now and forever.
Amen.