

Heaven: A World of Love

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[0 : 00] Well, heaven, which is what we have been talking about on these Sunday afternoons when we come together, heaven is going to be a much happier place than this.

It's going to be happier because, as Jonathan Edwards said, heaven is a world of love. It's a world of love. Listen to what he said.

There are many things contrary to love that make this world a tempestuous world. To a sea, selfishness and envy, revenge and jealousy, keep life on earth a constant tumult.

But, oh, what rest is there in that world which the God of peace and love fills with his own gracious presence and in which the Lamb of God lives and reigns and filling it with the brightest beams of his love.

So this world, like a storm-tossed sea, and so much of the time what makes it such a storm-tossed sea is what we bring to it or what people bring to it, their envy and jealousy and all the rest.

[1 : 08] But heaven is going to be a glorious, happy, happy place, dear brothers and sisters, and it's because it's going to be a world of love. Love is the great joy of heaven.

There's no greater joy than to love someone, and there is nothing better than to be loved by someone. So heaven is a world where the love of our hearts will go out and fill out others, and where the hands of our hearts will open up wide and the love of others will come into our life and into our heart.

And, Paul said it, love is the most excellent way. To paraphrase that, he's saying, what is best?

Love is the best. Listen to what he said in 1 Corinthians 13. And now I will show you the most excellent way. He's talked a lot about gifts and all sorts of other things, and now he's going to show us the best thing of all.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

[2 : 38] If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient.

Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud. It is not rude. It is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered.

It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices in the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease, and where there are tongues, they will be stilled. Where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child. And when I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.

[3 : 39] Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror. Then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part. Then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain. Faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love. So will faith exist in heaven?

No. There's no need for faith when your eyes are seen. Will hope exist in heaven? Paul asked, well, who hopes for what they already have?

Everything that we've always wanted, we all have it. So we won't be hoping for anything. But love, love never fails. Love is that great virtue that even makes it to heaven.

And lives in heaven forever. So heaven will be a world of love. Now, three questions this afternoon. What do I mean by love?

[4 : 41] That's the first question. What do I mean? What am I talking about? Why will heaven be a world of love? And what kind of love will it be? Well, we saw the kind of love that Paul is talking about that he says it never fails.

It's the patient, kind, long-suffering, not rude, not easily angered. That's the kind of love that he's talking about. Love in the Bible is at its heart something that is self-giving.

We give ourselves away when we love someone. We give ourselves to someone. And we give our heart, we give our life to someone to bless them, to make them happy, to give them life, to give them joy, to help them.

So Jesus himself said, there's no greater love than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. So in Jesus' mind, what is love at its greatest?

It's self-sacrifice. God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whosoever should believe in him will not perish, but have eternal, everlasting life.

[5 : 53] Love is giving in order to do good, to bless others. And that's the kind of love that I'm talking about. So today, a lot of people are thinking about love.

There's a lot of different definitions for love. But at the heart, the Bible's definition of love is someone's self-sacrifice. So you can think of the woman who wept those tears on Jesus' feet and dried his feet with her hair.

And Jesus said, now I want to point something out to you, Simon, Pharisee. This is love. This is what love is. It's self-abandonment. She wasn't thinking about her dignity.

She wasn't thinking about what other people were going to think of her. She just wanted to give. So feelings, falling in love, those have their places.

But at its heart, love is this commitment to do someone good, even when it costs you everything you have. And that's the kind of love that will fill heaven, where everyone is self-giving in order to bless.

[7 : 04] That's the joy of heaven. Now, the second question is, why will heaven be a world of love? Why will heaven be a world of love?

Why will every moment of heaven be loving and being loved? Why will love motivate all parts of us and everything going on?

Well, it's because God lives in heaven. And God is love. God shines with love.

Love in God is like heat and the light and the sun. It comes out. And so heaven is where God lives and where God shines.

And there he is. He's the fountain of love. It's the fountain of life. The river of life that comes from his throne. Well, the river of life is a river of love. And we talked about this in Joel and how that river will go into the driest places and make the dry ground blossom and those trees to bloom.

[8 : 12] So God's love will fill heaven like the waters fill the sea. Wherever you go in heaven, you'll be seeing and experiencing and drinking in God's affection, God's blessing and love for you.

So just like the sun fills the earth with light, God is love. And he's going to overflow in love to us. We're not going to fill God up with love.

No, he's going to fill us up with love. That's where the Lamb of God lives. That's where Jesus lives. The one who gave himself up for us. And he, there he is, ruling and reigning for us.

And there the spirit of love lives. He'll fill every soul. Now, what is the spirit's role? He pours out the love of God into our hearts.

So here is God's love. Well, how do we come to know it in our hearts? Well, the Holy Spirit carries it to us and fills our hearts. He pours it out into our hearts. Well, he does that now.

[9 : 14] He does it now in an imperfect way because we are imperfect. And yet in heaven, he'll fill us up completely with the love of God.

So the world will be, or the heaven will be a world of love because God the Father is there and he loves his children. God the Son is there and he loves his people. And God the Holy Spirit is there. So why will heaven be a world of love? Because we will be like him. We will be like him. What are the two greatest commandments? To love the Lord your God with all your heart and to love your neighbor as yourself.

Now we don't do those two things. Or we do them very imperfectly. But there we will do them perfectly because we will be like him. And so now we only faintly reflect him.

We are like broken mirrors or we're like dirty mirrors. That the light comes and yes, we reflect some of it. But a lot of it gets lost in the reflection. This morning I was driving to church and my windshield

was terribly dirty.

[10 : 22] And not a little, well, enough light was getting through. But it was a terrible looking windshield. And my windshield wiper fluid is frozen and I can't deal with it.

So I can't take care of it. But in heaven, everything will be clear. My heart will be clear. The light will shine off of me. And so brothers and sisters, we will be like God.

And love motivates everything in him. And there it will motivate everything in us. Love for others.

Love for him. Love for the angels.

Love for the angels. And so it's not going to be just God's love in heaven. It's going to be our love.

My love for you. Your love for me.

Brother and sister loving each other. And we're not going to be doing it half-heartedly. We're going to be doing it perfectly. Well, why will heaven be a world of love?

[11 : 20] Because there will be nothing but lovely people there. There will be nothing but lovely people there. Now, some people are easier to love than others.

Isn't that true? Well, in heaven, everyone we see is going to be the easiest people of all to love. God, our brothers and sisters, the angels.

There's no one ugly there. There's no one wicked there. There's no one spiritually selfish and wicked and spiritually ugly there. It's not just that.

It's not just that the worst of the worst aren't going to be there. Even here, sometimes the best people are hard to love. But there, all the imperfections will be taken out of them. And our hearts will burst out of their chest when we see people to love them.

Because they're lovely. Everywhere you cast your eye in heaven will be someone that draws out your affections. There will be the angels.

[12 : 27] Angels who have long loved us and watched over us because we were God's children. And we will see them and our hearts will love them. And we'll see each other. And even now, the church loves its own.

Don't we? It seems like when I go down to the men's prayer meeting, and I don't get a B in there very often. But when I get a chance to lead it, and I get a B there, I can't help but say, I love these guys.

I can't help but thanking God for them. Because in that place, when we're praying together, we're drawn together, and I love them. And I know they love me.

And so can you imagine what heaven's going to be like? Where it's perfect fellowship, perfect communion, perfect friendship all the time. We are going to be bursting with love.

And everyone will spend all their time loving and blessing. That's why heaven is going to be so happy. Because it's more blessing to give than to receive.

[13 : 32] And we will be giving. But oh, how we will be receiving at the same time. So the third question. What kind of love will it be?

And what I mean is, all that loving, all that affection going out. Let's think about that again. Well, it will be holy love.

Holy love. Sinless love. Selfless love. See, now our hearts are bent in on themselves so much of the time, isn't it?

And even when we do love other people, there's a good bit of selfishness that can be mixed in. But there, I'll be bent out in love.

There's no more bent in this. It will just be bent out in love. And it will be God-like love. And even better than that, it will be God's love in our hearts. Because the Spirit will be in our hearts.

[14 : 36] And so it will be sacred love. Pure love. Jesus dying on the cross kind of holy love. And it will be unspeakable.

From time to time, have you experienced that in your Christian life? Where the Spirit breaks in on your heart and you're struck with how deeply God loves you.

Or how wonderful His love is. And you're left speechless. Or you're left in tears. Because it's such a wonderful love. Well, that's the kind of love that will fill heaven.

That will be the kind of love that we love others with. And it will be deep, wise love. Paul, writing to the Philippians, says, you know, this is what I pray for you.

I pray that your love might abound more and more in knowledge and in depth of insight so that you might be able to discern what is best. So, love is not stupid.

[15 : 42] And love doesn't want to be blind. Love longs to see to the depths of people. To actually know what they really need and who they really are and where they're really at so that I can meet them and love them and do them good.

That's what love in its most pure form wants. It wants to know. It wants to understand. And so, in heaven, that's the kind of love that we will have. Now, here on earth, don't we struggle sometimes with that?

We go to maybe a funeral and there the person is suffering and we want to say something that would help them. That would express our love and our care for them. And yet, we don't know what to say.

And maybe sometimes we say the wrong things. A lot of people say the wrong things. And the answer is not to not say anything.

The answer is to pray for wisdom so that what you do say is discerning and what is best. Well, in heaven, that's the kind of love we're going to have for each other.

[16 : 43] No more foolish words. No more lame attempts. No more misguided tries. No more anything that comes up short. No more scratching our heads saying, I just don't know what to do.

I don't know what to say. I don't know how to love this person. Because in heaven, love will be perfect. And we will be able to tell what a person needs or what will do them good.

And so that love will give us eyes to see the bottom of people to do them good. And so every act of love will be perfectly wise. Perfectly discerning.

Perfectly helpful. Every act of love will be that perfect kiss on the lips that was just right. It will be unhindered love.

Nothing inside of me that keeps me from loving someone. So now in my heart and in your hearts, I'm sure there's roadblocks of sin that block up love.

[17 : 53] There's those uncertainties and those questions. And I'm not sure what to do. And I'm not sure how to do it. But not in heaven. And then there's some part of me and everything I do that says, I don't want to do that.

But I want to do what I want to do. But in heaven, there will be perfect selflessness. And there won't be any internal hindrances. And there won't be any external hindrances.

What I mean is, sometimes now we wish we could do things in love, but we don't have the resources. We don't have the time. We don't have the money. We don't have the opportunity.

You know, I know if I had a million dollars, I could do some things in the way of loving my wife that now I just can't do. So I don't have the opportunities.

There's these hindrances. We don't have the resources or the opportunities. And sometimes we're not even in the same place. They're here.

[18 : 53] We're there. But in my father's house, there are many mansions. There's enough room for all of God's people. So no distance will be too far for love.

It will be totally unhindered. And then last of all, it will never fail. It will be forever love. Forever love. Well, here, death ends marriages. And death hangs over everything. And it's not just death.

Sometimes life happens. And one person goes one way and one person goes another way. Maybe it's work. Maybe it's just differences of opinion. Things happen.

And relationships are broken. And the friendships that we once loved and enjoyed, they can't hold on under the stresses of life and moving and all the rest.

[19 : 55] And here, sin comes in and ruins relationships. And where there was once love. Love. Now there's not.

But heaven is forever love. God will forever and ever be loving us. And we will forever and ever be loving him.

And I will forever and ever love you. And you will forever and ever be loving me. That's our future. We are going to a world where every single person living there will love us. And we will love every single one of them. I will be theirs and they will be mine.

And we will say that of God. We will say that of each other. And so, that's our bright future. So, no more envy and jealousy and all that tumult that we talked about.

[20 : 54] Just perfect love. And so, we should cheer each other on and comfort each other with these things. We should cheer each other on and comfort each other with these things.

Let's comfort each other as we get older. And as our bodies begin to break down. Just at lunchtime, we were just talking about getting older.

And how we're starting to say, oh, wait a second. You know, I can no longer say a tenth of my life is over. I have to say, oh, man, it's getting to look like a half of my life is over.

So, what do you do as we are getting older together? And we're experiencing those things. Well, let's encourage each other. We are going to a world of perfect love.

We are going to a perfect world. And so, it's not death to die to leave this world behind and go to a world where everyone is loving. And let's comfort each other as we are suffering.

[21 : 54] We can encourage one another, brothers and sisters. You can encourage one another. You don't have to have a magic formula to encourage your brothers and sisters. You know what you need to do? You need to tell them of the hope of the glory to come.

You need to encourage them with the gospel. You don't have to come up with something new. Tell them what the Bible says. And so, this is God's promise to you, my dear suffering brother or sister. Here is God's promise to you. You are going to live in a world where love never fails. So, what does that say about how he feels about you?

What does that say about his intentions and his purposes and his heart towards you? Jesus died to win you heaven. Then how he must love you. You can say that to your suffering brother or sister despite their circumstances because God's promise is shining over their life.

And we can spur each other on to love and to good deeds. And we can spur each other on to kill sin. So, if Jesus died to win us heaven, should we sin?

[23 : 02] No. If we will rise to a world of happiness and love, therefore we have no obligation to the sinful nature to live according to it. But we are not those who die and stay dead.

We are the children of God and heirs of life. And therefore, we don't have an obligation to live to sin. Rather, we have an obligation to live to righteousness. So, if we are living and our citizenship is in that world, then what should I say to my sin?

Has no claim on my life. Has no right to rule here. And this is how we can encourage each other to persevere and to keep on.

Remember the story months and months ago now of that woman who was long distance swimming. It was like 20 miles or something. And it was a foggy day.

And she swam and swam and swam. And she got tired. And they said, no, keep swimming. And so, she did it again until finally she couldn't take it anymore.

[24 : 09] And she gave up. She couldn't see the end. It was just nothing but fog all around her. And she gave up. And they couldn't get her to start going again. And then, after she had given up, she realized that she was only 200 yards away from the shore.

And she said, if I could have seen the shore, I would have kept going. Brothers and sisters, one thing that we can do for each other is help each other see that shore.

Say, keep going. We can talk about it. See, the wonderful thing is we're not, well, we're not just swimming all by ourselves, are we?

God put us all together. And here we are on a team. And we're just not, we're tied together. We're committed to each other. And so, we need to cheer each other on, encourage each other daily, and all the more as we see the day approaching, when we will leave this world and go to that.

And this world will be long gone. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you that we are going to a world of love, where you shine in everything, and we see you in everything, and where we will be perfected in love, and all of our brothers and sisters, and all the citizens of that country will be perfected in love.

[25 : 38] And so, there will be no more jealousy. There will be no more misunderstandings. There will be no more impatience. There will be no more rudeness. There will be no more anger.

There will be no more peace. There will be no more peace. There will be no more peace. There will be no more peace. And peace. And quiet. And calm. And happiness. Thank you that that is the world that you have promised us, and that you are bringing us there.

Will you please encourage our hearts with these things, that when life begins to throw mud on us, and we get bogged down, and we get discouraged and we have sin and we have difficulties and trials, that we will remember where we are going and not lose sight and not lose hope.

Please fasten our eyes on Jesus and help us to set our minds on things above, not on things below. Pray these things in His name.

Amen.