

Heaven: Where Jesus Is

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[0:00] Today we end our series on heaven. And to be honest, it is with a little bit of a sense of failure for me. When preachers preach on some things, especially the glories of Christ, how the love of God, the greatness of God, the mystery of the cross, the joy of heaven, it doesn't ever feel like we can get up to where we want to be.

We don't have the words or the thoughts that would do heaven justice. So there is still something more, more glory, more goodness than I've been able to describe.

There's things I wish I could have said better. There's things that I think we need an angel to preach to us if we're really going to have them. But back in April of 2015, we started this little series.

And we started it in John chapter 14. And I'm going to ask you to turn back there to John chapter 14. And the first time I preached on this passage, it was to say that heaven is a truth that we should think about when we are troubled.

And surely this whole life has its troubling times. We live in days of trouble, and the disciples did too.

[1:33] And in those moments of trouble, the divine remedy from the good physician was, let's think about heaven. Today we're going to look at it in a little bit different light.

We're just going to read the first three verses of John chapter 14. Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms.

If it were not so, I would have told you. I am 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.

You know the way to the place where I am going. Well, what is heaven? Heaven is the place where Jesus is.

Heaven is the place where Jesus is. I will come back and take you to be with me, that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.

[2:41] Heaven is where Jesus is. That's the last thing I want us to think about together. Jesus makes heaven, heaven. Jesus makes heaven, heaven.

Over the last year in these sermons on heaven, we've looked at it in a variety of ways. Heaven is going to be a new earth. The new heavens and the new earth.

Heaven is going to be on the new earth. It's not going to be in a spiritually bright, shiny, light place where spiritual beings do spiritual things. Heaven is a real place.

It's going to be really here on earth. You will be able to touch it. You will have resurrection bodies to walk around in. And heaven, you're going to do a lot of earthly things.

Animals and birds and trees, people. There's going to be mountains and deep oceans and stars in the sky and rivers and all of it more beautiful than we could possibly imagine.

[3:43] And yet, if Jesus wasn't there, it wouldn't be heaven. And we looked at things that aren't going to be in heaven. In heaven, there's no place for death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things that's passed away.

So there's not going to be things in heaven. Decay, death, funeral homes, sad families, gather around a deathbed, pain, MS, headaches, sleepless nights, miscarriages, divorces, yelling, screaming at each other.

No more wars. No more arguments. No more hospitals. No more insurance companies. No more car crashes.

No more birth defects. No more floods. No more brain tumors. No more cancer. And it would seem like if all that was true, that that would be heaven. But without Jesus, that wouldn't be heaven.

We talked about heaven as a reward. We talked about it as a perfect world of love where everyone is lovely and everyone is perfectly loving. So to go to be in heaven is to live in a society where I am perfectly loved and also I love perfectly in return.

[5:00] But if Jesus wasn't there, it wouldn't be heaven. So what is heaven? I will take you to be with me. I will take you to be with me.

Or as Paul put it, I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far. So what's the sweet middle of it all?

What makes heaven heaven? What's the necessary ingredient? It is Jesus Christ and him in his immediate physical presence.

You will see him. With your own two eyes. He will be in front of you. You will see him in his majesty. You will see him in his immediate presence.

He, in turn, will see you with his own two eyes. There's something wonderful about thinking about me seeing Jesus with my own two eyes.

[6:01] But there's also something amazing about him looking at me and seeing me and registering my presence with his own physical eyes. Now, we worship.

We're just saying it. We worship in his presence. But we worship spiritually. We worship with a veil between us and him, between heaven and earth.

And I know he's here with us. But then, then we will see him. Then we won't worship through a veil. We won't worship spiritually, so to speak. We will see him right in front of us. Some of my favorite, favorite hymns have lines that talk about the worship in heaven.

Because when I am singing those lines, I can imagine being there and hearing it and seeing it. And it's the most joyful, wonderful thing that can be imagined.

[7:06] There's an old Christmas hymn that I really like. We don't sing it here. Maybe we can learn it sometime. But it pictures Christ descending from heaven to earth.

And this is how it goes. And use your imagination. Because this is, I think, a picture of the worship in heaven, at least as we imagine it. It says, rank on rank, the host of heaven spreads its wings on the way.

As the light of light descendeth from the realms of endless day. And at his feet, the sixth wing seraph, cherubim with sleepless eye, veil their faces to the presence.

As with ceaseless voice they cry, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Lord most high. Now, can you imagine that? The angels spreading their wings.

The cherubim spreading their wings as he goes down. And at the bottom, the cherubim fall down at his feet, cover their eyes, and worship him. In heaven, we will get to be a part of that kind of worship.

[8:13] We won't sing, we don't sing that song, but we do sing of his return to heaven. So that's a song of him going down to earth, the angels worshipping him.

Now, we do sing this song of his return to heaven. Look ye saints, the sight is glorious. See the man of sorrows now. From the fight return victorious.

Every knee to him shall bow. Crown him, crown him, crowns become the victor's brow. Crown the Savior, angels crown him. Rich the trophies Jesus brings. In the seat of power, enthrone him.

I love this line. While the vault of heaven rings. Imagine the angels lifting their voices and heaven shakes. Their voices are so loud and rings. Crown him, crown him, crown the Savior, King of kings. Saints and angels, crowd around him. Own his title, praise his name. Crown him, crown him, spread abroad the victor's fame. Hark! Let's listen to those bursts of acclamation.

[9:18] Hark those loud triumphant chords. Jesus takes the highest station. Oh, what joy the sight affords. So can you imagine that? The vault of heaven ringing.

We see him sitting down. And everyone is crowding around him, glad to see him on the throne. That was not what he experienced on earth.

But yet, here he is in heaven with all of the citizens of heaven and all of the saints gathering around him and joyfully seeing him take that highest place. Well, that is heaven to be there.

To worship in his presence. To be there with the angels. To see him being glorified. See him with our own two eyes.

And believe it or not, for him to see us. For him to look at us. To hear our voices.

[10:19] He will scan the crowd. And your eyes will meet his. Maybe you know those eyes. Eyes across the crowd.

You're at the Christmas party and you see your husband or your wife. And they're over there and you're over here and all the noise is going along. But your two eyes meet just for a second. And even though it's all going on, there's that immediate connection.

No one else shares that moment except for you two. Well, heaven is being with Jesus in the party of all parties. The celebration of all celebrations. And him looking into your eyes.

And you looking into his. Well, that's heaven. I remember on my wedding reception. Just thinking about how wonderful it was that that girl over there in her beautiful white dress.

Was my wife. And she's mingling with the crowd. And she was mine and I was hers. Well, that's heaven. He is mine. I am his. The bride eyes, not her garment.

[11:23] But her dear bridegroom's face. I will not gaze on glory. But on my king of grace. Not at the crown he giveth. But on his pierced hand. Can you imagine seeing Jesus pierced his hand?

The lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel's land. So in heaven. He will see you. You will see him. You will be with him. But heaven is more than just public worship.

Living with Jesus is more than that. It says, I will take them where I am. He says, in my father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.

He doesn't say, in my father's church, there are many Sunday school classrooms. He says, in my father's house, there are many rooms. And living together.

Like a big. In a big house. I am not saying heaven is just going to be a big house. But that is the kind of intimacy that he is talking about. Living together means spending time together.

[12:24] With him. With him with other people. With him by yourself. Now. I know we are just.

We don't know what it is going to be like for sure. But I don't think there is any time. Or any doubt. That there will be time. Between just you and him.

And I come to that. Just from a different. Or from a different. Some different perspectives. Because. That is what it is like living in a house. That is what it is like living in a family.

There are intimate times. There are times when a lot of people are there. There are times when it is just you and another person. In the resurrection.

Jesus spent personal. Private time with certain people. All by himself. He met with Peter. Because Peter needed a special word from him. Peter did not need all the other disciples around.

[13:24] To hear what Jesus had to say. And what Jesus had to tell him. So Jesus. Remember him. And John. He is walking on the beach. And he has Peter by his side.

John overhears him. But this is a moment between him and Peter. And. It seems like that. The resurrected Jesus. Does take time to be with his people individually.

And it seems that in heaven. Then we will have alone times with him. You will have alone times with him. Where you will share with each other. And speak with each other. For your ears only.

In Revelation. It talks about. How we will each have a stone given to us. With a name. That no one knows except for us. It is just a stone between.

It is just a name between us and God. It is a picture of just personal intimacy. That he knows me in a way. That no one else does.

[14:22] He relates to me in a way. That no one else does. And so it seems that in heaven. You will have times. Where you can share with him. And it will be for his ears only.

And that is heaven. Sharing life. With Jesus. Faith. Not spiritually. Not by faith. I mean. But physically. And by sight. First Corinthians talks about that.

Faith. Hope. And love. But faith will go away. Because faith will give way to sight. There won't be a need for faith. And there won't be any hope. Because we'll have everything we've hoped for.

So faith and hope get put on the shelf. But love. Love is the greatest. Because love will last. And his personal love for you. Will be more real.

Than you could ever imagine it being now. More real. Than it ever could be now. His personal affection. His personal delight. In you. Will be more real.

[15:23] Than it ever could be now. And so. You know by faith. But there you'll see. His eyes. And he'll see you.

And you will hear his words. On your ears. And at long last. And I think this is the secret desire. Of every Christian. That at long last. We'll be able to fall at his feet.

We'll be able to kiss his feet. And we'll be able to tear. With tears in our eyes. Say thank you. Thank you for what you did for me. Thank you. For saving me.

Thank you. For loving me. When I was a wretch. Thank you. For putting up with me. And being so patient with me. Thank you. For the cross. Thank you.
For what you did for me. Thank you. For. For all of this. For all of this. And. That's what heaven is. Living with Jesus. Being with Jesus.

[16:23] Now. As I end. I want to just say. That's. That can be a test. Of whether you really are a Christian or not.

Is that what you most hope for. In your heaven. Him. Getting to relate to him. Being with him. Does alone time with him.

Sound almost too good to be true. Because it sounds so wonderful. Because. He has your heart. Or is heaven anything. And everything. But that.

If. There was no Jesus. In heaven. Would that be heaven to you. Real Christians. People that have. God's spirit. In their hearts.

They want to be with Jesus. More than anything. So you can weigh yourself. Is that what I want. Or do I want something else. If that's not what you want.

[17:21] Then if you go on your way. That's not what you're going to get. So I would encourage you. To test yourself. Say this is.

What kind of heaven do I want. And if that is the heaven. That you want. More than anything. To be with Jesus. To live with him. Then that is your bright hope.

That is what you're going to experience. Jesus himself says. If I go and prepare a place for you. If I go and do that. If I go and build a room for you.

Aren't I going to turn around. And come back. And bring you back into that room. Who builds onto their house. So that someone could live with them. And then just forget about it.

Jesus says. If I go. To prepare a place for you. I will come back. And bring you here. And that is our great hope. That Jesus himself. Personally. Will take us by the hand. And bring us up there.

[18:18] Let's pray. Heavenly Father. We thank you. We thank you for Jesus. Jesus. Thank you for these words. Thank you for the hope of heaven.

That we will get to be with you. And live with you. In the father's house. Thank you for preparing. A place for us. And we truly say.

Heaven would not be heaven without you. We could have. A million. Billion years to live. In a perfect world.

With no death. No mourning or crying. And yet. If we didn't have you Jesus. If you were distant from us. That place would be misery.

We do want to be with you. Help us then to follow you. Help us to maintain fellowship with you now. As we eagerly wait for.

[19:20] The fruition of all of our hopes. As we eagerly wait. For you to come and finally. And completely. Save us. Give us patience.

Give us grace. Pray for those who don't. Who are outside of Jesus. Who have no hope for heaven. Lord. Will you please. Go and fetch them in.

And bring them in. We ask this in his name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.