

Company in Heaven

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[0:00] Well, Satan works overtime to confuse and to blind people to the next world. And that's why we are taking these afternoons to look at the topic of heaven and to set our minds on things above.

And it is a war, and every war there's a lot of misinformation, a lot of confusion. Before the Allies invaded Normandy in June of 1944 in the Second World War, the Allies worked overtime to make the Germans think that the invasion was going to the city of Calais in France, which was the closest part of France to England, and so it kind of made sense that the invasion would come here.

And so they let out information to that effect, and they even went so far as to build a fake army out of plywood and inflatable balloons, and they had an entire army there waiting for the Germans to see, thinking, okay, it looks like the invasion is going to be coming to Calais.

Well, it was all a lie to get the Germans to focus on the wrong place. It was all a lie to get the Germans to focus on the wrong place. Satan works overtime to make us focus on the wrong place. He says, and our hearts find this echoing in our unbelief that there is no heaven or there is no hell, or it says something to the effect of, if there is a hell, he says, then it's not so bad.

[1:33] Or if there's a heaven, it's probably not as good as they're making it out. It's not so good. You just keep thinking about right here and right now, and let this place grip your hearts.

Well, it's a lie. It's a lie. No one in hell will ever think, I thought it would be worse than this. And no one in heaven will ever say, I thought it would be better than this.

Well, let me repeat that. No one in heaven will ever say, I thought it would be better than this. So if you're thinking there is something about heaven that doesn't sound good, then you're probably misunderstanding it.

You're probably confused. Satan is confusing you. He is out there. He is the father of lies. And so we have to see through his lies.

And that's what this afternoon is about. We want to pull down. I want to pull down one of Satan's lies about heaven. And maybe it's not a lie that you've ever even thought of, or it's not a lie that you realize people struggle with, but it is one that I have heard.

[2:37] I've heard from people, from Christian people. I've heard them wondering about it. And so I thought it would be good to address it. And that is this. Here's the lie.

The only relationship we'll have in heaven is with God. We won't know other people. We won't recognize other people. We will only know and have a relationship with God.

So people think some pretty funny things about heaven. Will I be able to recognize my loved ones when I see them? Let me just say right at the beginning, the answer is yes.

Of course, yes. Sometimes people think that because in Luke, the two disciples didn't recognize Jesus right away when he appeared to them in his resurrection body.

And so they think, oh, we must not be able to recognize each other. But that passage says they were kept from recognizing him. It was for a very short time.

[3:33] And then when their eyes were open, they saw, oh, yeah, it is Jesus. And when Jesus appeared before the disciples in the upper room, they didn't say, who is that guy? They said, it's the Lord.

They fell down and worshiped him. So we will recognize each other. We'll have these self-same bodies in heaven. We will spend. So the question is, is will we spend all of our time thinking only and always about God?

Will I have other relationships? One theologian said this, and otherwise, I'm not going to tell you who it is, but otherwise, this man is a fabulous theologian. And he said this, to be in paradise and live with God is not to speak to each other and be heard by each other, but it is only to enjoy God, to

feel his goodwill and to rest in him.

What a thing to say. To be in heaven is not to speak to others or be heard by others or hear others. It's only to enjoy God. After all, didn't Asaph say, there's no one in heaven I desire besides you? And so people in their hyper-spirituality think that is all heaven is going to be. It is me enjoying God. Now, of course, there is an element of truth to that.

[4:50] In heaven, the primary enjoyment is God, and feeling his goodwill and resting in him is what makes heaven heaven. But it's right to say we'll enjoy God, but it's wrong to say that we won't speak to anyone, we won't know anyone, we won't recognize anyone.

The only relationship we'll have, all our mind will be completely on God, with no time for anyone else. It will just be God and us. And at first blush, it sounds spiritual, because it seems like it's making God to be the big thing.

And of course it is. God is really important. He's the most important thing after all. And in heaven, everything will fall away, and it will just be me and God. That's what it sounds like.

But in fact, it is a lie. And the problem is, when we believe it, a shadow comes in our hearts about how good heaven is going to be.

And really, if that's something that I'm completely wanting. So Satan leads us and discourages us with his lies. Well, it's completely wrong.

[5:53] And I'll tell you why. It's wrong because it gets our humanity wrong. It gets how we were made wrong. So what did God say in the garden? It is not good for man to be alone.

Remember, he made Adam. He made him in the garden. And after everything, he said, it's good, it's good, it's good. And then when he came to Adam, he said, now there's a problem here. It's not good for man to be alone.

And so then he made Eve. And after he made Eve, he said, now this is very good. You notice what he did. He didn't say, well, Adam has me, and that's enough.

He said, no, there needs to be another. Adam was made for others. He demanded, he needed others. He needed an Eve. And only when there was an Eve, did God say, now everything is very good.

Because man is, now it's more than one. Now it's just, it's more than Adam and God. It's Adam and Eve and God. And God made us that way. He made us to want other people, to have relationships with other people, to need that.

[7:00] And when that was done, he said, that is very good. He didn't say, that's not very spiritual. He said, that's very good. And so, this wanting and desiring to see your lost loved ones who've gone ahead, it's not a frailty to overcome any more than our bodies are a frailty to overcome or to leave behind.

It's to be human. And so if we say, heaven will just be me and God and I won't know anyone else and I won't have any other relationships, that's to totally miss how God has made you.

the reason you miss those people and long for them is because God made you that way. And death is the intruder. It is the enemy to be overcome.

That's the first thing we want to say about that lie is it totally misses the mark about what it means to be a human. And God's saying, you know what, when you're together, that's very good.

The second thing is, it's a false choice. It's a false dichotomy to say, well, you can either have men or God. That's the false choice, the false dichotomy. A real dichotomy is, you can't eat your cake and have it too.

[8:16] You know that. Some people say, well, we say, oh, they want to eat their cake and have it too. They want two opposing states at the same time. That's a real dichotomy. You can't have your cake and eat it too. But it's a false dichotomy to say, well, you can't have ice cream and cake.

Well, I have ice cream and cake all the time. One and the same, at the same time. The false dichotomy is to say, you can't enjoy people and enjoy God at the same time. I think some of our greatest joys in heaven is going to be seeing what God has done in those people and what he has made of them.

So, wives, or widows, you've lost your husband. How glorifying, how much praise are you going to give God when you see what they've done, what God has done to your husband?

And doesn't Scripture say, how can anyone say they love God if they don't love their brother?

You show me your love for your brothers and I will show you love for God. That's what John was saying. And Paul can say, the entire law is summed up in a single command.

[9:27] And it's interesting, he doesn't say, love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul and strength. He says, love your neighbor as yourself. In heaven, are we going to be less of law keepers than we are now?

Is the law going to be reduced? The law of heaven smaller than the law of earth? I think most of this lie boils down to Satan trying to make us more spiritual than God.

And it ends up we miss the boat completely. But listen to Jonathan Edwards and he got this right. And as I read it, I want you to think about your fathers and your mothers and your husbands, those who have gone before you.

Edwards said this, every Christian friend that goes before us from this world is a ransom spirit waiting to welcome us in heaven.

There the Christian father and mother and wife and child and friend with whom we shall renew the holy fellowship of the saints which was interrupted by death here but shall be commenced again in the upper sanctuary and then it shall never end.

[10:39] there is a bitterness buried in every relationship here in every marriage it's that knowledge that at some point one of us is going to die and in that relationship is going to be broken death ends it and there's this great divide that between the living and the dead and we can't cross over and they can't cross over to us but it's not just death that keeps relationships from happening or breaking relationships it's life it's the providence of God I think all of you could probably think of someone that you used to have such close friendship with such a good relationship with and now you're not friends you're hardly friends anymore because they're on the other side of the world they're somewhere else you've moved on it's the providence of God we were sitting around the table a couple weeks ago and we have this box of questions you know to generate conversation at our dinner table and so we had this box of questions and one of the questions asked who do you wish you could live closer to who do you wish you know you wished you could live nearby and instantly

Stephanie had someone she knew someone right in her mind she used to live a mile from our house and they love each other very much and they get along so well but now she's in South Carolina you don't get to see each other very much and instantly I had someone someone who I got I get along with so well we see each other it's almost like once a decade and when we get together it's like no time at all has passed we instantly pick up not missing a single step but humanly speaking my life would be better if he lived near me I would love for him to be my next door neighbor and that's the way it is on this earth isn't it relationships are hard to maintain and death is buried in each one of them but in heaven our friendships will never break in death and we'll never move away so we can't be with each other they'll never disappear because they moved here or there and so dear widows you will have your husband's back not his husbands but his friends if they were in the

Lord the dearest sweetest friends and heaven is that place of never ending friendship and friendship is what makes life so sweet here and it won't be God is not so cruel to keep it from you there after all friendship is godlike friendship is divine because before there were ever humans there was father son and holy spirit three friends bound in the closest bonds of love never ending friendship and heaven is when we get to there and that comes to us and Jonathan Edwards said now think about who's waiting for you to welcome you on the other side to welcome you into that friendship they are and the Bible talks about that the Bible talks about reunion with people remember the

Thessalonians they were sad because they they didn't understand what was happening after death they were confused about some things and Paul wrote brothers we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep or to grieve like the rest of men who have no hope so why are they sad they're not sad because they're not going to see God or they're not going to be with God when they die they're sad because they're thinking they're not going to see each other or that there's no resurrection that these relationships that they loved and they had are broken forever and Paul's answer is not well you have God and that's enough he says God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him what is the last day well it's a reunion it's a family reunion with those who have fallen asleep in him we who are still alive in our left will be caught up together with them and so we will be we will we will be with the Lord forever therefore encourage each other with these words we can encourage each other we can encourage our widows because we can say no if they're in the Lord you know you're going to see them again therefore encourage each other with

these words

Paul says don't worry you'll see them again and all together we'll be with the Lord Richard Baxter said and this is very honest with him and you could tell what he's fighting through when he writes this Richard Baxter said I know that Christ is all in all and that it is the presence of God that makes heaven to be heaven but yet it much sweetens the thoughts of that place to me that there are there such a multitude of my most dear and precious friends when he thought about heaven he thought all my friends are there so many of my precious friends are there yes I know Christ is all in all and I know that he's going to be the greatest joy of all but so many of my precious friends are there and longing for Christ is not against longing for people again this is the false dichotomy to say we can't long to see those people and we miss those people and we want to be with them and that's not somehow less spiritual in Philippians 1

[16:28] Paul says it is right for me to feel this way about you you know if you haven't read Philippians in a while Philippians is just dripping with emotion with Paul loving these people he loved them so much he says it's right for me to feel this way about all of you God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus I want to be with you I miss you I want to be with you but it's the affection of Christ Jesus it was because Paul was trusting and loving and living in the goodness of Christ Jesus that he wanted to be with his people and I would say isn't that true for many of you yes you want Christ and that is the highest of heavens to see him and to enjoy him but you long for your loved ones lost to you for now but not lost to God because Jesus said for God is not the God of the dead but of the living he is the

God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob and what Jesus was saying is Abraham Isaac and Jacob are alive right now and living with God because God is not the God of the dead but the God of the living Satan's lie would take your humanity away from you and he does that and it would strip Christ of his glory as a savior because he came to save his people from their sins he came to save us as a people and Satan's lie would strip you of your joy and your hope but just remember it's a lie heaven is the place of eternal!

with God and with each other there is a tie that never breaks now this is where I want to end by saying this not every human relationship will go on forever and ever those in hell will have nothing to do with those in heaven there's no crossing over forever separated so the relationships that all the relationships you have now you might not necessarily have forever and ever and so parents pray for your children pray for your children that they might be saved and children pray for your siblings and pray for your parents that if they're lost they might be saved and if you are lost and you love anyone if you love your parents and you're lost think about it will that love last forever will that relationship last forever your sin very well could absolutely destroy that relationship and forever separate you too sin is so wicked and

God is so holy the penalty of sin is eternal death and separation from God and from God's people and that's why Jesus is a great savior because he can save you from your sin and he can take you from going to hell and he can bring you to heaven you do only have one hope it is Jesus Christ for there is no other name given under heaven given to men by which we must be saved Jesus Christ is our only hope that we'll all get there let's pray heavenly father we thank you for the hope that we have as we think of heaven thank you that the relationships of brothers and sisters in Christ will not be broken and forgotten and left behind but will be picked up and enjoyed and lived in forever and ever and that is to your praise that you would save a people you would save your brothers and sisters and bring them to heaven to live with you forever but

I do pray that you would make us to be mindful that heaven and hell are separate and not every relationship will last so make us people who pray with earnestness for the lost that they might not go to that place to the place of darkness and shame and death but we could live with them forever I do pray for those who are lost they are dead I will raise them raise them to life in Jesus name I pray amen