

HC 58- Real Joy Now and For Eternity

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

People get heavenly feelings when they use a **certain kind of shampoo**, when they drive their **Mercedes**, when they dig into a tub of **Haagen-Dazs ice cream**, or if they marry the **girl of their dreams**.

I have no doubt eating Haagen-Dazs ice cream is wonderful, but is it really heavenly? **After all, fifteen minutes after eating it, the taste is long gone!** Similarly, **your hair gets sweaty again** and you have to wash it again. The **Mercedes gets old and rusts**. And everyone who is married knows that **marriage is wonderful but it is not heaven**. All marriages end in death or before!

However, **you can have and enjoy a real, lasting taste of heaven now and then have that joy increased when you enter heaven** later.

Hear from God's Word about it.

Our headings are:

Enjoy everlasting life in this world

Enjoy everlasting life out of this world

Prepare for everlasting life out of this world

Our goals are: **That you will rejoice in the future blessings you will find in Jesus and that that will motivate you to diligently work for him now.**

58 Q. HOW DOES THE ARTICLE CONCERNING "LIFE EVERLASTING" COMFORT YOU?

A. Even **as I already now experience in my heart the beginning of eternal joy**, so after this life I will have **perfect blessedness such as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no man has ever imagined**: a blessedness in which to praise God eternally.

Enjoy Everlasting Life in this World

1. **Eternal life begins in this world** and you have that guarantee now, resulting in joy.

God was willing and able to give you eternal life. God's **Holy Spirit worked in you** and caused you to receive God's promise of eternal life through faith. The **Holy Spirit then convinced you that you had eternal life.**

He said that nothing is able to separate you from God's love and promises...not persecution...not poverty...nothing...is able to separate you from his love.

John 10:28 "And **I give them eternal life**, and they shall **never perish**; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

1John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you **may know** that **you have eternal life**, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

The doctrine of eternal life is not understood by Arminians. They believe they can have eternal life and then lose it. Does that make any sense? **If one has eternal life...how can eternal life be lost?** "Eternal life" means "life which cannot end." ...whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life...

Your whole view of life changes when you become a Christian. God graciously strengthens you every day. Joy!

2. There are additional blessings you can receive in this world as part of your eternal life now.

Mark 10:29 So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, 30 **who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time**—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—**and in the age to come, eternal life.**

The Lord was not saying you will get 100 mothers or 100 houses. There is no guarantee you will be rich, or healthy, or famous in this life. The Lord simply meant you will get something worth more than a house, or a brother, or a sister, or a mother, or a wife, or a child, or husband, or property.

What are some of those additional blessings you receive now?

If you have eternal life **you don't need to worry about anything...**

When people are panicking from unemployment...**you won't panic because you know Jesus has provided greater things for you already.**

When others fear getting sick and dying, **you won't fear.** You know better times are ahead.

While non-believers are afraid to die, **you will smile when death comes...**

You won't fret when a Christian who is close to you dies (though you will mourn).

These blessings all bring joy – joy already in this life!

3. You will have joy now when you grab hold of Christ's promises and live with ardent hope.

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

If you find you are despondent and dejected from time to time, see if you are failing to grab hold of promise of eternal life. You should have joy! **Don't rob yourself of the joy that God offers to you.**

Let God remind you daily you are his for eternity. Go to his Word. Enjoy his sacraments. Your Father has your future sown up; **don't live in poverty and eat husks like beggars.**

Enjoy Everlasting Life out of this World

1. Having established that you have eternal life in this world and that it is not just some future activity, let us now examine the fullness of eternal life out of this world.

Every believer in Christ will be taken to heaven and enjoy the fullness of life there.

2. First, look at the biblical basis of this doctrine in the New and Old Testaments:

John 17:1..."Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 "as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that **He should give eternal life** to as many as You have given Him. 3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

John 6:54 "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood **has eternal life**, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God **is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Matthew 25:46 "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into **eternal life.**"

John 14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe

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

Old Testament saints already had hope of heaven. Psalm 73 shows there is not a time we are not with the Lord. (You saw that last time.) Another example is Job. He knew and longed for heaven!

Job 19:27 Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Look how deceived Jehovah's Witnesses are...believing that you will "cease to exist."

3. What will you not have in heaven?

"No tears in heaven. No sorrows in heaven. All will be glorious in that land. There'll be not sadness; all will be gladness. When we shall join that happy band!" There with your Savior you'll live and reign forever.

There be **no corrupt politicians** there, **no whining children**, **no crooked civil judge** telling you if you speak the truth of God's Words it is evidence of hate, **no lazy husband** will ever forget to take the garbage out, **no one will struggle to communicate in foreign languages**, and **no spousal arguments**. All things will be new there.

Psalms 16:9 Therefore my heart is glad, and **my glory rejoices**; My flesh also will rest in hope. 10 For **You will not leave my soul in Sheol**, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

So the lady who sang, "If you came back from heaven, I'd never let you go back," was unkind!

4. What will characterize eternal life in heaven?

When God gives you something it is of the perfect quality. His gifts are always good...the best. So everyone in heaven will be perfect. Each one will listen enough and talk enough. No one will bottle-up, and no one will give or get the silent treatment. Every single one of your needs will be met. There will be more blessings that you can't comprehend in this life. You will have unspeakable joy. If you think a child has joy when he sees his chocolate birthday cake with sprinkles...or if you think that is joy seeing your bride come down the aisle...you "ain't seen nothing yet."

1Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written: "**Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,** Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

The thing for which the Apostle Paul was waiting was beyond anything anyone had seen on earth before.

Psalm 16:10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 11 You will show me the path of life; **In Your presence is fullness of joy;** At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 17:15 As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; **I shall be satisfied** when I awake in Your likeness.

You might be joyful with your children, but that joy is quickly shattered when they do something wrong. Not in heaven! Your life will perpetually be joyful.

5. You will be able to see the face of Jesus when you wake up from your death!

It is wonderful to wake up and know your husband or wife or parents are there to care for you and love you, but imagine when you open your eyes and see your loving Savior – a Savior who gave his life for you! And then he says: "**Come, your warfare has ended...your struggles are over...rest in eternity with me!**"

Yes, everlasting life is greater and sweeter than the best spouse in this world.
This is why there is no marriage in eternal life. There you will be like the angels...in the presence of your Savior forever...Joy!

6. There are some others who will live too, not in heaven, but in hell in torment.

It is rightly called eternal death because they will be eternally separated from God. What sadness!

Prepare for Everlasting Life out of this World

1. Long to go to heaven.

Look forward to being delivered from this body and be taken to heaven at the right time.

Philippians 1:23 For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

2. Since your rewards of heaven will be commensurate with how faithfully you serve your Savior now, work hard to store up treasures you can enjoy forever.

And don't worry, **no one will be jealous if you have more rewards than they.**

But of course, you have no ground for boasting as **your good words are not pure and they only earn you a reward because you offer them through Christ.**

Matthew 6:19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

What works can you do to prepare for heaven? Worship! Pray. Help the poor. Be patient. Care for the weak. Know God's Words. Daily confess your sins. Speak of Christ's love and justice.

Conclusion:

As a blood-bought believer, you can begin to enjoy eternal life in this world-not by how much stuff you accumulate, but by the knowledge, blessings, and comforts you have in your heart.

Later, you will enter into eternal life in heaven and enjoy it in fullness. There you will find no night, no pain, no betrayals, no death, no destruction, no disaster, no boredom, no fear, no Covid, no cancer, and no dissatisfaction. There in heaven you will find peace and joy beyond present human ability to understand. You will enjoy friends in fullness. You will be in that household of God and praise God in perfection.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Knowing what is waiting for you in heaven, don't worry. Don't be bothered by the fact the wicked intoxicate themselves with the excesses of life and seem in good health, while your life seems hard. Their pleasures will vanish like the dew in sunshine. Be patient as you face abuse in this life for your faith. **With true, lasting joy you can put up with a lot!**

2. Instead of being bogged down by sin, love him and rejoice in hope.

3. Show that love by your faithful obedience.

Finally, eternal life is a reward (which brings joy) only for those who have peace with God through Jesus. If you don't have that peace, pray. Ask God to accept the sacrifice of Jesus as a substitute for your judgment. If you sincerely ask, he will hear and respond by giving you eternal life.