

Heaven

#2 in Series on Heaven

Hebrews 12:1-3

March 6th, 2011

Last week we noted that the anticipation of future events is almost as satisfying as the actual event itself. Therefore if we can understand all the future joy that awaits us in heaven, it will translate to present joy here and now. And that present joy in the Lord will give us the desire and strength (Neh. 8:10) to live fully in accordance with the will of God.

I submit to you that it is only when we are excited about our heavenly citizenship (Phil. 3:20), that we will become a responsible citizen for God on earth. We will invest in human relationships because we know souls are eternal. We will reorient our goals and aspirations in line with God's desires. We generously give of our time, money and talents because we desire to have our treasures for eternity. We will learn the Bible because as Jesus said, His words will never pass away (Mt. 24:35). We will spread the good news of Christ because we long to fill heaven's ranks. The list continues. So much of what we do is for the joy set before us.

An excitement for heaven will empower God's people. So, what is so exciting about heaven? Let's briefly review our three points from last week and then conclude with three more points for this week.

1. OUR GOD IS THERE

Without a doubt, what makes heaven so great is God's presence. Not only do we get to see the living God in all His glory, but we get to spend eternity with the One whom we love the most.

2. OUR HOME IS THERE

Second, last week we said that heaven for the Christian is our true home. Philippians 3:20, "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Eph. 2:19). Luke 10:20, "[Our] names are recorded in heaven." 1 Peter 1:4, "[Our] inheritance ... [is] reserved in heaven for [us]" (Eph. 1:18). And Colossians 1:5, "[Our] hope [is] laid up for [us] in heaven."

3. OUR REWARDS IS THERE

A third blessing of heaven that we covered last week is the fact that all our eternal rewards are waiting for us up there.

Now lets go on to three additional treasures that will truly make heaven a wonderful place. A fourth blessing of heaven that will grant us greater present joy – we will be reunited with our loved ones in Christ once again.

4. OUR LOVED ONES IS THERE

Paul made his heart clear to the Thessalonian church. He spoke of his love for them (1 Thes. 2:8) and “great desire to see [their] face” (1 Thes. 2:17). Then he speaks of the great reunion they will one day have in heaven with him and with each other. (1 Thes. 4:13-14, 17-18). The comfort comes not only that we will be with the Lord, but also that we will be with each other.

Puritan Richard Baxter longed for that comfort: “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 in Christ.”

For true Christians, death only becomes a temporary departure (an interruption not a separation) until we are reunited in heaven

LET ME GIVE YOU A FIFTH REASON WHY HEAVEN IS SO GREAT AND WHY ITS FUTURE GREATNESS WILL INCREASE YOUR JOY RIGHT NOW.

5. OUR COMPLETENESS IS THERE

Heaven is a place of utter holiness. In heaven the curse will be totally reversed.

God’s people are those who want God’s holiness in their own lives and in their surroundings. Matthew 5:6 declares, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” Christians by the power of the Holy Spirit eagerly pursues holiness, just as their heavenly Father is holy (1 Pet. 1:16) Those who love sin will not be in heaven.

6. OUR COMFORT IS THERE

One more reason heaven is our abode of joy is because in heaven all our pain will be taken away, and we will enter a place of eternal rest and comfort. Pain and discomfort will find no home there. And the Sabbath rest promised for all God's people will be finally realized (Heb. 4:1-11).

Heaven is the place where the fulfillment of all God's promises of comfort are realized.

Christian, realize the blessedness of your future home. And then allow the future joy awaiting you to bring present joy to your life today!" Fix your eyes on Jesus who served the Father so faithfully "for the joy set before Him" (Heb. 12:2). May the joy of the Lord in all He's promised you in heaven be your strength today!

There's no disappointment in heaven,

No weariness, sorrow or pain;

No hearts that are bleeding and broken,

No song with minor refrain.

The clouds of our earthly horizon

Will never appear in the sky,

For all will be sunshine and gladness,

With never a sob nor a sigh.

We'll never pay rent on our mansion,

The taxes will never come due;

Our garments will never grow threadbare,

But always be fadeless and new;

We'll never be hungry nor thirsty,

Not languish in poverty there,

For all the rich bounties of heaven
His sanctified children will share.
There'll never be a crepe on the doorknob,
No funeral train in the sky;
No graves on the hillsides of glory,
For there we shall never more die.
The old will be young there forever,
Transformed in a moment of time;
Immortal we'll stand in His likeness,
The stars and the sun to outshine.
I'm bound for that beautiful city
My Lord has prepared for His own;
Where all the redeemed of all ages
Sing "Glory" around the white throne;
Sometimes I grow homesick for heaven,
And the glories I there shall behold;
What a joy that will be when my Savior I see,
In that beautiful city of gold!

~ F.M. Lehman