

Heaven's Blessed City

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During this past fortnight, the hand of death has been amongst us. And many of us long for the touch of the vanished hand and the sound of the voice that is still. And while thinking of the ravages of death, the last great enemy, the human race in our midst, I was contemplating and meditating, once again, upon what God has prepared for those that love him.

Sometimes amidst our sorrows, sometimes amidst our loneliness, sometimes amidst our heartaches and heartbreaks we are apt to forget the joy and the felicity and the eternal happiness of those redeemed ones who have gone on before us.

I believe that God's people should be continually meditating upon the subject of heaven for three reasons. Number one, we are definitely going there. There is no doubt about it. We are going to spend all God's great unending eternity in heaven. And, surely, we should give careful consideration to those [?] in the Scripture that we feel something about heaven to us.

Every person saved by grace, washed in the blood of the Lamb, one day, will appear in the courts of heaven. There will be many a battle before that day, many a struggle, many a storm, many a tempest, many a heart break and heart ache, many a pain, many a bereavement. But one day, thank God, we shall be there. There is a place where we are all going who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, a place of rest, a place of health, a place of joy and a place of eternal happiness.

That is the first reason why we should continually think about heaven, for we are definitely going there. And I want to say there is not a devil in hell nor a sin concocted by the enemy, nor a temptation forged on the anvils of the pit will keep one of God's redeemed people from heaven.

Thank God we have heaven begun within our hearts and we are going to reach that land. That is the first one.

Secondly, the Church of Jesus Christ bears the same relationship as a bride bears the relationship to the bridegroom. And when the bridegroom prepares the house for his bride, the bride most certainly is interested in her future home. Every plan that the bridegroom makes, the bride is most certainly interested in the plan. Our heavenly

bridegroom has gone to prepare a place for us. And surely if we are part of the bride of Christ, we should be [?], we should be continually meditating and contemplating what Jesus is preparing for us.

The Bible says, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”¹

I wonder what secrets heaven will reveal to us. I wonder what sort of place my Savior is preparing for me. Every saint of God will have a mansion. Talk about the buildings of this old world. They will only be like hen houses compared to what God is preparing for us, what our Savior with loving hands for over 1900 years has been skillfully planning, a wonderful mansion for the people of God.

So we should be interested and contemplate heaven because the bridegroom is preparing for his bride.

Last of all, we should be interested in contemplating heaven because when we do so the wounds of bereavement are strangely healed. The pangs of our loved ones passing feel a balm and oil of blessing. And what to the world means disappointment and that scar never to be healed, to the Christian as we contemplate heaven, we come to that state of mind where we can say, “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”²

May the Lord help us to contemplate heaven this morning in this service.

Some things I want to mention to you about heaven. But before I speak to you about these things, could I remind you that death to the believer is a conquered foe. Death to the believer is not the king of errors for, praise God, death to the believer, is a foe that Jesus Christ has battled with and Jesus Christ has conquered.

If you are saved, you will never walk through the valley of death. Jesus walked that valley for you. You will only walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Jesus walked death’s valley for his people once and for all. And now no longer is it the valley of death. It is only the valley of the death’s shadow. Praise God. As far as the substance of death is concerned, Jesus [?] the conqueror of the grave, triumphant over death forevermore. [?] of the risen Christ he holds the keys of hell and of death.

When our children were small my wife used to prepare them for bed downstairs and then she would put them in her arms and, as only a mother can, would put them over to sleep. And then she would carry them up stairs. And when they woke up in the morning they awoke upstairs. That is what death is like. One day the Father in his tenderness will wrap us up and put us to sleep downstairs. And it will be a peaceful sleep that we will have. We may have a storm before it. We may pass through severe pain. It may come to us in some sudden accident or death may come in some great tragedy, but let me tell you. The

¹ 1 Corinthians 2:9

² Job 1:21.

Father's hand will be there putting us to sleep downstairs in a world of care, in a world of pain, in a world of tragedy. But when we awaken, praise God, we will be upstairs in the Father's house.

We needn't fear death for Jesus will be with us. No believer will cross Jordan although Jesus will take our hand.

Do you remember Mr. Fearing in *The Pilgrim's Progress*? He worried about death all his days. And then when he came to cross the river, the river was at its lowest possible ebb and he crossed over almost dry shod. You needn't worry about death, believer. Jesus will take care of it. It is only the gateway to heaven.

Should I say today that heaven is a place? I am not talking about a state, now. I am talking about a definite place where the spirits of the glorified are at this very moment. And every one of us have loved ones that have fallen asleep in Jesus.

Where are they? They are in heaven, a place, a definite, particular place. Just as much a place as this city and this house in which we are at this moment. Heaven is a place.

You know, did you ever notice in the Word of God that heaven is described by a series of negatives because it is such a wonderful place that our finite minds could not grasp if it was described positively. So God tells us about some things that will never be in heaven in a series of "no mores."

First of all, we read there is, "No night there."³ Night is the time when the great crimes of this world are committed. Night is the time in the hospital wards when the anguish of disease ravages the human body. Night is the time of fear. We read of Solomon's great champions and they girded their swords by their side because of the terrors of the night.

But, praise God, there is no night in heaven.

Some of us have had nights in our minds, black patches over our souls because of trials and circumstances. And we walked in a veil of shadows and the sun hid itself behind dark clouds. And it seemed that all our life was going to be a journey of darkness. But let me tell you, friend, there is no darkness in heaven. The clouds, the night clouds are chased away forever.

"And they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light."⁴

Oh, there is eternal brightness in heaven. No dark shadow there, no night seasons there. There is, says this book, no night there.

Something else, it says there shall be no more death. There is no ringing of the death bells in heaven. There is no funeral processions ever wend their way down the streets

³ Revelation 21:25; 22:5.

⁴ Revelation 22:5.

paved with gold. There is not one of the saints ever puts on the black garments of mourning, for the people of God are dressed eternally in shining white. They never mutilate the [?] of Zion with the great [?]. Thank God there is no death there.

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”⁵

What a city, without a graveyard. What a city, without a mourner. What a city, without a bereaved one, without a sorrowing one. What a city, without anyone missing through death in the home. Hallelujah. We are going to a land where there is no more death.

We have all put on the garments of mourning. We have all had broken hearts and tears and [?]. We all had our losses as we have traveled life’s lonely journey. We all have our heart pangs and heart aches for loved ones long since gone. But blessed be God there is no death in heaven. What a city.

Something else. The Bible says there is no sorrow there.

We used to sing in sabbath school, “There will be no sorrow there in my Father’s house, in my Father’s house. There is no sorrow.”

This world is filled with sorrow. You only have to go among men to know that every man has a sorrow and every woman has her sorrow. There are sorrows of circumstances. There are sorrows of disappointment. Many a Father and mother are disappointed in their family. They haven’t turned out the way they should. They have wandered in by path’s meadow. They have brought dishonor and disgrace to the family name.

And then there is many a father and mother this day, this God’s day have a loneliness in their heart, the sorrow of disappointment. But I want to tell you, friend, there is no sorrow in heaven. Sorrow is a complete stranger to the city of God. There will be no hearts full of sorrow. There will be no need for comfort, no need for consolation, no need for words of sympathy. Why? Because sorrow is unknown in heaven. What a place, where there is not one sorrowing heart, where there is not one word of sympathy, where there is not one heart that is filled with sorrow’s cares.

The Bible goes on and says there shall be no pain in heaven.

When I walk through the hospital wards, when I attend to the sick and the dying and minister from the book to those that are feeling the terrors of bodily complaints, I thank God there is a place where there will be no more pain. I thank God there is a place where everyone is healthy.

The old prophet Isaiah said, “There is one thing they never say in heaven, ‘I am sick.’” There is no sick ones there. The saints are all healthy.

⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:55.

We were singing it this morning, that [?] said, “Now, for I am afraid some of the saints are tested in the crucible of pain, prepared by God to bring them home to heaven. And we all of our fiery trials. And there are some of our congregation that would love to be with us, but they can’t be here this morning. Some that used to sing the praises of the Lamb amongst us, but they are not here.

You know why? Because their body is feeling the quick scourge of pain. Their body is sore. And as the aging shadows come and the night falls of life comes to them and the sands of time run out, their body can no longer stand up to the vigor and the stresses of the day and there is pain. But there is no pain in heaven. What a city where there is no cry of pain ever heard or no one ever says they are sick.

What’s more—and this follows on—there is no tears in heaven, for God has wiped away all tears from off their faces. Tears are the universal language of the race. Every man knows how to cry. Put a man from one pole before a man from another pole from this old earth of ours together and if they both shed their tears they will both understand. It is a universal language. Everybody sheds their tears. Even the stoic goes in and shuts himself in the room and thinks no one sees. But the tears flow. Praise God, God is going to wipe away all tears from his people’s faces. Never shed another tear in heaven.

Why? There will be nothing to cry about. There will be nothing to bring sorrow to the heart or a tear to the eye. Think of it. All burdens gone, all distress is finished, all conflicts pass, no more temptations, no more battles with sin, no more frustrations, no more disappointments, no more depressions. Hallelujah God will have wiped away the tears from the faces of his people. What a city that must be.

The Bible says something else. There is no more sea. I like the sea. I like the roaring of the waves. I like to hear the waves pouring their fury on the rocks. But the sea speaks of four things and these four things are not in heaven.

The sea speaks, first of all, of the storm, the billows of the deep, the crashing thunders of the foam capped billows as they rock the boats that are upon them and crash unrelentingly and continuously upon the rugged reefs of the shore. But there is no storms in heaven. The storms are all over. The captain of the deep has spoken the eternal word, “Peace, be still,”⁶ and storms are no more.

You have faced many a storm during your life and so have I. No doubt there are more storms ahead of us. Perhaps the worst billows that our bark ever faced and the worst howlings of the wind that we have ever endured lie before us. God only knows. Thank God storms are over when we cast anchor in God’s great city.

Secondly, the sea speaks to me of restlessness.

“But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest.”⁷

⁶ Mark 4:39.

⁷ Isaiah 57:20.

And there is one curse common to every one of us and that is the curse of restlessness. We all go and come, don't we? We all hasten hither and thither, don't we? We all are restless and we live in a restless world. And this, of all ages, is a restless age. And we are captivated with the restlessness of the circumstances that surround us.

And, mother, let me tell you. One day all hard labor will be over. Dear father, let me tell you this morning. One day you will rest in heaven's blessed [?], when the chores of life are all completed, when all the things that occupied your mind and heart and hands are done, thank God we will sit down at the end of the day. You dear women folk, as you do the daily round and the common task, you are glad when you can get a little sit down at the end of the day.

I like to sit down when I come home, no matter how [?] just to sit down at home and to know that the youngsters are in bed and all is save and I usually get a hymn on the old radio gram and listen to it. And there is something nice about sitting down in your own home. I usually take off my shoes and put my feet up and I am home. I have had a hard day's battle, but thank God I am home and there is rest. Praise God some day we will put up our feet in heaven forever more and we will be at rest.

Don't you long for it? I long for it many a time when the battle is sore, when things are all going wrong, when there is nothing but darkness and trouble and tragedy and hardship. I long for heaven. Praise God there is a day of rest coming. No more sea, no more restlessness, we will rest. The sea speaks of separation.

Many of us have loved ones. We like to talk to them, but they are across the sea. We go down to the shore. We look across, but seems to be an unending expanse of grimy deep and we cannot see them because they are separated.

There are separations that come, my friend, because of the natural sea. But there are separations that come because we are standing today at the sea of death and our loved ones are separated from us. The dear mother longs for that little one whom God took away suddenly. She longs to clasp that little one again to her breast, stroke her curly head, whisper only the words that a mother can speak.

But let me tell you, mother, some day you will see your little one again. Some day you will hold that little child again within your arms because the Bible tells me that children play on the streets of heaven. Heaven has every characteristic of home. It is a wonderful place, heaven.

I will tell you what else. The sea speaks of cleansing. There is no cleanser like the briny salty sea, but, you know, the saints of God don't need any cleansing. Isn't that wonderful? We will have washed our robes eternally in the blood of the Lamb and our robes will be white forever more.

Someone said to me just recently, "Do you think we will know one another in heaven?"

I was reminded of what an old Puritan preacher said, “As if we would be more ignorant in heaven than we are here. Don’t we know one another down here?”

Hear what the Bible says, “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face.”⁸

The trouble with us is we don’t really know one another. If you really knew your friend, you would understand some of the things about your friend that you don’t now understand, the things that lead to difference and misunderstanding will be all cleared away if you really knew that friend.

“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”⁹

It was a little boy some time ago and he was born without his sight. And his people took him to specialists and they took him to one specialist and this skillful specialist of the eyes said, “I think your boy could see if I operated on him.” He said, “It is a chance, but I believe he could.”

And the parents gave their consent and after the operation, of course, for many days the bandages were around the little boy’s eyes. And then there came the day when the bandages were to be taken off. And the father and mother stood breathless beside the bed.

The surgeon carefully unwound those bandages and allowed just a little of the light in and to the amazement of father and mother the little boy could see.

And do you know what his first words were?

“Why did you not tell me it was so beautiful?” And then he said, “Let me see the man who gave me my sight.”

There are two things about heaven. There is its beauty, but best of all there is the man that gave us our sight.

We are going to see Jesus. What a thrill to see the lord. I long to see him. God knows my heart. I love him with all my being, but I long to see the tender look of his blessed eye, the mark in his nail pierced hand and the blessedness of the one who loved me and gave himself for me. In heaven we will say, “Why didn’t you tell me it was so beautiful, but let me see the man that gave me my sight.”

I know there are men and women in this meeting this morning and they are not saved. You will not be in heaven, friend. You are not ready to meet God. You ought to come to

⁸ 1 Corinthians 13:12.

⁹ Ibid.

Christ this morning. You ought to trust the Savior this morning. I plead with you in Jesus Christ's name. Come to the Savior now and be saved today.