

Heaven

A future reality, with a present impact

Over the last 2 weeks Pastor Don has been expanding on earlier message on Mark 10: 1-20 drawing out in more detail 2 successive themes;

(1) The Church reality. The church on mission, where we saw Christ sending out the 72 on what was effectively the first missionary endeavor. Don spoke about what that looked like and involved, and lessons that we can draw from it for us today.

(2) The Spiritual reality. The release of spiritual authority by Jesus over the lives and ministry of the 72, and the implications of that for us individually and as a church today

Which brings us to today to where Ps. Don has asked me to speak about the Future or Heavenly reality that we find illustrated for us in Luke 10: 20

Luke 10:17 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

Luke 10:18 He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

Luke 10:19 I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

Luke 10:20 However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

In verse 20 what we have is Jesus saying to the 72 disciples a statement outlining a fundamental principle that they and we should take to heart. He is not saying that their rejoicing over the effectiveness of their ministry is wrong but rather it should be placed in context with their eternal destiny. He is in fact saying that their eternal destiny is of greater value, of greater worth than their successful ministry.

Now to understand what Jesus is saying, we need to correctly understand what our eternal destiny is all about. So, let's start with the basics, and look at;

1. What is Heaven
2. Who will go to Heaven
3. Therefore - What are the implications for us today

What is Heaven

A discussion with God -

Recently I was talking to God in my prayer time about the question of “why we won’t sin in Heaven” My question was based around 2 understandings that I have;

- (1) That in heaven there will be no sin for God cannot tolerate sin in His presence, and
- (2) That because we have free will we sin because we choose to.

Thus, my question was, in Heaven, as we will still have free will, why won’t we still sin, still choose to sin?

God’s answer came in 2 parts

- (1) We sin when we allow ourselves to be tempted by the devil to choose to believe his, the devil’s, lies over the truth of God. In heaven, there will be an absence of temptation as the devil, the tempter, will be finally removed.
- (2) While driving to work that day there was one section where I had an uninterrupted direct on view of the hills and the sun was just about to break over the top, it was beautiful and "inspiring" - God said that in heaven, with the Son of God ever before us, in all His majesty and glory, so much more will we be "inspired" to good.

I took from this explanation that Heaven is not just a place where there is no evil, but it is so much more. For it is the very “dwelling place” of God, it is the place of His Kingdom.

The Lord ’s Prayer

Mat 6:9 Therefore pray in this way: Our Father, who is in Heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

Mat 6:10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as *it is* in Heaven.

These 2 verses for me sum up very simply yet so comprehensively what Heaven is, it is the place of His Kingdom where our Heavenly Father, Almighty God, where His will is done, not out of fear of punishment but rather out of love for there He is indeed known by us, so completely and deeply and intimately, to be our loving Heavenly father. “For now, we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall fully know even as I also am fully known.” 1Co 13:12

And if Heaven is the place of His Kingdom, as we have just described, then the bible, from beginning to end, from Genesis to Revelation, speaks volumes on the reality of Heaven. In Genesis, we have for us picture in Eden (pre-the entrance of sin and the fall of man) the reality of heaven on earth. God’s will was done out of loving obedience and man lived in His very presence. God met with man and conversed with him face to face.

Who will go to Heaven

Before we look at who will go to heaven, there is something very fundamental that we must understand about heaven.

And that fundamental understanding is this, **that without Jesus Christ, his birth, death, and resurrection, there is no heaven for anyone.**

Joh 3:12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

Joh 3:13 And no one has ascended up to Heaven except He who came down from Heaven, the Son of Man who is in Heaven.

Here in these 2 verses Jesus is establishing his credentials, and then later in John 14 he gives us information based upon His credentials as a one who originated in heaven.

Joh 14:2 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.

Joh 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, so that where I am, you may be also.

There are many people today both outside the church and inside the church who believe that there are “many” ways to get to heaven. However, for me I will believe the only one who came from heaven for He alone is qualified to answer these questions. “Doubly so because He alone predicted His own death and resurrection and pulled it off” as one American pastor is fond of saying. And indeed, what does Jesus say about who will enjoy an everlasting / eternal life in Heaven, let us read John 3: 12 – 18.

Joh 3:12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

Joh 3:13 And no one has ascended up to Heaven except He who came down from Heaven, the Son of Man who is in Heaven.

Joh 3:14 But even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

Joh 3:15 **so that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, **that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

Joh 3:17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him.

Joh 3:18 **He who believes on Him is not condemned,** but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

Who will enjoy an everlasting / eternal life – Those who believe in and on Jesus Christ, God's Son

What are the implications for us today

In talking about going to heaven we are talking about the resurrection of the Saints of God and 1 Corinthians 15 is what I will call “The Resurrection Chapter”, where Paul speaks to issues around the subject of Resurrection. He then concludes the chapter with, in verse 58

“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.”

His first word “Therefore”, is a fantastic word and says of the current topic “that we are where we are at because of what has gone before” or rather “based upon what has gone before, what has happened, what has been done before – then we should now.....”

In essence the word “therefore” is a word based upon a timeline. It is a word indicating cause and effect. It is also a word that signifies “that from this time / place forward” our thoughts and / or our actions, and / or our understanding, should be different. And that this should be so specifically because of what has gone before

Paul lays out for us in this chapter 15 chapter of 1 Corinthians 4 primary successive topics which all together form the basis for his “therefore” statement.

1. **The Resurrection of Christ** (v1 – 11) Here Paul talks about the established fact of many witnesses to the truth of the actual resurrection of Jesus Christ
2. **The Resurrection of the Dead** (v12 – 34) You will remember earlier how I said that without Christ there is no heaven for anyone. Here, in these verses Paul speaks of actual resurrection of Jesus Christ as that which opens the way for us and secures our hope of resurrection
3. **The Resurrection Body** (v35 – 49) Here Paul speaks to questions of what our resurrection body will be like.
4. **The Mystery and Victory** (v50 – 58) Here Paul speaks to the mystery and victory that is the “Resurrection of Christ” and the Saints “O death, where *is* your sting? O grave, where *is* your victory?”

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Paul concludes the chapter with, in verse 58

“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.”

But stand firm upon what?

Let nothing move you from what?

Therefore, stand firm and let nothing move you, be firmly established in the fact that Heaven, our Heavenly Fathers kingdom, is both a reality and an eternal destiny for **those who believe in and on Jesus Christ, God's Son**

Joh 3:13b He who came down from Heaven, the Son of Man who is in Heaven.

Joh 3:14 But even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

Joh 3:15 **so that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

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Joh 3:17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him.

Therefore, stand firm and let nothing move you from this **now established fact. This true understanding** of our eternal destiny, based solely upon the love of God, the finished work upon the cross, and the actual, vital, resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's own son, **should now be the basis upon which all else is based.**

When Jesus spoke those words to the 72 as recorded in Luke 10:20

However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, **but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."** He was in fact saying that everything this side of Heaven is temporary. There is value to all that we can and will do in this life yes, but it is temporary compared to the surpassing glory of our eternal destiny in our Heavenly Fathers kingdom, Heaven.

In conclusion Let me share one final word on who will or won't go to Heaven

As I said earlier there is something very fundamental that we must understand about heaven.

That without Jesus Christ, his birth, death, and resurrection, there is no heaven for anyone.

Joh 14:2 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, so that where I am, you may be also.

There are many people today both outside the church and inside the church who believe that there are "many" ways to get to heaven but for me I will believe the only one who came from heaven for He alone is qualified to answer these questions. "Doubly so because He alone predicted His own death and resurrection and pulled it off" as one American pastor is fond of saying. And as such we can draw the following from what Christ has said.

If God had not sent His Son to earth to be born as a man there would be no heaven for us.

If Christ had not suffered and died, shedding His blood to redeem us, there would be no Heaven for us.

If Christ had not been resurrected from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father in Heaven there would be no heaven for us

Therefore, everything that is about heaven as an eternal destiny for us, is based solely in and upon Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The Sheep and the Goats - The Final Judgment Matthew 25:31 - 46

Mat 25:32 And all nations shall be gathered before **Him**. And He shall separate them from one another, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats.

Mat 25:33 And indeed He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats off the left.

Mat 25:34 **Then the King shall say** to those on His right hand, Come, blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Mat 25:41 Then He also shall say to those on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.

The dividing line of this separation will cross all boundaries. It will separate geographical groups, political groups, religious groups, and also family groups. On each side of the line there may well be different members of family groups. Husbands and wives may be separated parents and children may be separated, and siblings may be separated.

I want to sum up these verses and those in between this way. Getting into heaven will have nothing at all to do with who you are or what you have done. It will come down to just one thing and that is this. Does Jesus Christ the King of Kings and Lord of Lords know you for in essence that is the line that divided the sheep and the goats. In effect The King of Glory will say one of two things;

1. I know you, pass to the right. Come, blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. One bible commentator writes "To such the King will be no stranger when they shall see Him on the throne; nor will they be strangers to Him. He will recognise them as His own; and they will recognise Him as the very King of Love for Whom their souls have been longing. To all such will the gracious words be spoken "Come""
2. I know you not, pass to the left. Depart from Me.

3 weeks ago, one of the opening remarks Ps Don made regarding The Church reality found in Luke 10 was this. He said, in reference to the harvest mentioned in v2 that the "fields are white unto harvest but the laborers are few". How true that was then and more so is it true today. And even more so for the Hour of Our Lords return draw steadily closer indeed.

Question?

Who, understanding the great need and the eternal implications, will say with me "Lord here am I, send me" to do my part in fulfilling your great commission give unto the Church, to go into all the world, local, national, international to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with all.