

LIFE AFTER LIFE: "Heaven Can't Wait"

INTRODUCTION

"Of this blest man, let this just praise be given: **heaven was in him, before he was in heaven.**" (Izaak Walton, speaking of Puritan Richard Sibbes)

- Heaven is not simply a **destination** to which we are going; it is an **orientation of the heart** that we're living day to day (Philippians 3:20-21).

OUR POSITION (COLOSSIANS 3:1)

- **3:1 - If then you have been raised with Christ,**
 - This verse describes one of the great New Testament doctrines describing our relationship with Christ – our **union with Christ**. (Ephesians 2:5-6).
 - God sees the believer as **in relationship to Jesus Christ** – we died, were buried and were raised in identification with Christ.
 - Therefore, all of the blessings and benefits from Christ's exalted position come to us! "The Christian life is the high life the elevated life." (Hebrews 1:3, Acts 2:33, Ephesians 1:19-22).

OUR PRIORITY (COLOSSIANS 3:1-2)

- **Seek the things that are above (3:1)** – Describes a search that is made in an earnest manner (e.g. Luke 15 – a shepherd seeking after his sheep).
- **Set your minds on things that are above (3:2)** – Describes the inner disposition and thinking of the heart. "Turn your internal meditation towards eternal things on a regular basis."

Practical Application:

1. **Focus on Christ** – Think of His love for you and long for the day of His return.
2. **Resist the urge to settle down and make peace with the world** – Remember continually that we are just pilgrims passing through this world.
3. **Meditate on your own death:** In the middle of your suffering, anticipate the nonstop joys of heaven.
4. **Think through the stewardship of your resources:** store up treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:19-20).

OUR PREDICAMENT (COLOSSIANS 3:3)

- **3:3 – For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**

"The divine mystery, which has been disclosed to believers, has not been disclosed to everyone and the truth lies concealed to many." (Derek Tidball)

- The heartbeat of our life as believers is a mystery to the world (1 Peter 4:4-5).
- We are caught between what we have become in Jesus Christ and what we will eventually be when he comes again.

OUR PROSPECT (COLOSSIANS 3:4)

- **3:4 – When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.**

1 John 3:2-3 – Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Sermon Application Questions

October 6, 2019

PERSONAL RESPONSES

1

Pastor Philip opened this message series on heaven by stating: “Heaven is not simply a **destination** to which we are going; it is an **orientation of the heart** that we’re living day to day.”

What was your response to this statement? What are some ways that a “heavenly-minded” believer behaves differently in this world?

2

Pastor Philip told the story of a man on the TV show *Shark Tank* who missed out on an investment that would have given him \$250 million dollars. How much greater are our spiritual riches in heaven!

How would our lives be different if we understood the spiritual riches that we have “in Christ”?

How should the doctrine of the believer’s **union with Christ** make a difference in how we live our lives?

DIGGING DEEPER

1

Take some time and reflect on some of the key passages related to this week’s sermon. Ask the Lord for help in making application of these truths to your life.

Philippians 3:20-21

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Ephesians 2:4-7

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:5-8

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Matthew 6:19-21

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

2 Thessalonians 1:9-10

They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

2

Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-18. How does the doctrine of heaven give hope and comfort to believers who are experiencing suffering in this life?

What happens to the believer's attitude when we lose this eternal perspective?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

1

Randy Alcorn has written that the command "seek the things that are above" (Col 3:1) describes a "diligent, active, single-minded investigation."

He explains, "The command to set our hearts and minds on Heaven implies that this is not something we naturally or easily do – we have to be reminded and directed to do it. Our minds are often caught up in earthly things."

Choose **one** of Pastor's Philip's practical applications (or write your own). Think of a way to make this application a reality in your life. How will you actively cultivate a heart that is focused on heaven?

- Focus on Christ** – meditate often on His love for you and cultivate an earnest longing for His return.
- Resist the urge to settle down and make peace with this world** – Constantly remind yourself that this world is not our home; we are just pilgrims passing through this world.
- Meditate on your own death** – In the middle of your suffering, anticipate the nonstop joys of heaven.
- Think through the stewardship of your resources** – think through how you can maximize your heavenly rewards (Matthew 6:19-21).
- Other:** _____

2

Read Colossians 3:1-4 and then read the following passage **Colossians 3:5-10.**

What is the connection between the doctrine of heaven and the believer's pursuit of holy living?

Can you think of any other passages that draw this connection?

Consider writing out a prayer that the Lord will use this message series on heaven to sanctify your life and make you more holy.