

Lesson 2

Homesick for Heaven

Introduction

Have you ever been home sick? Homesickness is a unique feeling, because ‘home’ isn’t as simple as a location. The anxiety, the feelings of grief and despair that come with being away from the people and the things we hold most dear can be heavy. It can be disorienting and scary to be away from what’s familiar.

Often times we feel at home here on earth for a while. We make spaces in houses that we call “homes” where we really find a sense of home with the people we love. Earth is familiar to us in a lot of ways. It’s all we’ve known.

The Bible says that this world is fallen though. Are there things about earth that make us feel homesick? Well, sure. Do you ever feel like this world isn’t your real home? There are things that happen on earth that effect us so profoundly —enmity, injustice, pain and loss. There are things that make us shake our heads and go “this can’t be it.”

When we think about these things, sometimes we begin to feel homesick for a place where there is no sin. We wish for a place where justice and mercy reign. We long for a place where we can live together in harmony. We long for the days where no one ever takes more than needed. We long for the days when we are brought into perfect harmony and order. We are homesick for a world that will never be realized on Earth—we’re homesick for Heaven.

For discussion:

1. How do you define the idea of ‘home?’
2. What does it mean to be homesick? Can you remember a time you felt that way? What are some of the thoughts and emotions associated with homesickness?

Home — It’s Where Your Heart Is

Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 37.4

It is important for us to understand that when we are pursuing this idea of “home” that we define the term. When we say home, this is not simply referencing “a place to live.” Embedded in every heart is a strong desire and a sense of journey for a place not just to live, but to *experience God richly*. Where there is God there is love. Where there is God there is familiarity. Where there is God there is safety. Where there is God there is fulfillment. Where there is God there is real joy.

Let's go through those again, love, family, safety, fulfillment and joy. If that's not home, then what is? How do we know that Heaven is the destination for our souls? Heaven is the ultimate culmination of all of our inner most heart-desires. What the psalmist said is true, for those that seek him, God grants the desires of their heart.

In Heaven all these things are completed and infinite:

- Love. God and the family of God will be there in perfect love. 1 John 4.7
- Family. He and His children will be in perfect fellowship and harmony. Ephesians 2.19
- Safety. There are no more dangers or threat of destruction, 2 Corinthians 5.1
- Fulfillment. We'll have everything that we need. John 4.14
- Joy. A number of other untold and unfathomable blessings. 1 Corinthians 2.9

What makes Heaven a home for the soul is not the "street of gold," or "flowing rivers of honey." Heaven will surely be beautiful but the architecture won't be the only reason. The things that make a good home will also make Heaven wonderful. When we seek after God, we'll find that home isn't about material things or anything temporary. It's about love, mercy, justice and truth. It's about being with the highest good forever and ever. Home is wherever our God is. That's why Heaven will be amazing—that's why it's home.

For discussion:

1. What do you think Heaven will be like?
2. Can we have Heaven on Earth? Why or why not?

How'd We Get So Far From Home?

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way...

Isaiah 53.6

The prophet Isaiah said that everyone has gone their own way. Isaiah says that at some point we all get off track and wander away from the way that leads back home to our creator. We shouldn't accept this—not when being lost means being separated from our God. We need to get back on track. In order to find our way home, it's very important that we figure out how we got lost to begin with. Further, once we've realized how we've lost our way, it's important to do what we can to get back on track.

Put simply, we lose our way when we turn away from God and sin. One Hebrew word for sin is "*avon*" which can be translated as crooked or bent out of shape. We can try to twist God's way and bend it, but it remains straight. Whenever we try to forge our own path and do things "our way" we inevitably end up lost.

As we've said, our home is where God is. Yet, at times all of us have said "maybe there is another way." According to scripture, 'our way' leads inevitably to dead ends and ultimately a place where there is no God, and thus none of the things that make "home." At the end of the our journey here on earth, whether we make it home or not will depend entirely upon whether or not we will listen to the call of our Father coming down from Heaven.

For discussion:

1. What do you think Heaven will be like?
2. Can we have Heaven on Earth? Why or why not?

The Call From Heaven

"and many peoples shall come, and say:
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.'
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem"

Isaiah 2.3

As we walk our paths down here on earth, there is a constant ringing coming down from Heaven. (Also known as Zion.) God is calling us to where He is, all the time. God's call isn't a literal ringing—it's a sermon. In some ways it preaches louder than anything we could ever hear from a pulpit. The whole creation cries out to the existence of a creator.¹ God has made himself hidden, but able to be found to anyone who would seek to know Him. The call from Heaven comes to us in the breeze as it bristles through the trees, the changing of seasons and the rising and setting of the sun. It has always been so. That's not the only way God makes Himself known though.

In times before, prophets also bore the message God was delivering by way of inspiration. Through the Old Testament, God used prophets, priests and kings to position His chosen people at the correct time and place in history to accomplish His will. We read about this well-orchestrated plan and how it eventually culminates in the coming of Christ through His revealed Word.

Now, the call of Zion comes from many Christians who have been entrusted with His message of salvation. God often uses believers as lampposts to guide us on our own uneven and steady path.

¹ see Romans 1.20

Christians are living out and preaching about the call that we've been given alongside a creation that's groaning for what God will do next. In the mean time, we have a call from above;

...but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel...

2 Timothy 1.8b-10

For discussion:

1. What is our calling?
2. What does Jesus call us out of?
3. What does Jesus call us into?

Prayer for today—

Lord, heal my homesick heart and show me the way back home. Help me to recognize who you are and walk in your way more and more every day.