

TIME OF REFLECTION

“Belonging to the church will always increase our obligations and decrease our independence. And this is good.”

~Megan Hill in *A Place to Belong: Learning to Love the Local Church*

“There in heaven this fountain of love, this eternal three in one, is set open without any obstacle to hinder access to it. There this glorious God is manifested and shines forth in full glory, in beams of love; there the fountain overflows in streams and rivers of love and delight, enough for all to drink at, and to swim in, yea, so as to overflow the world as it were with a deluge of love.”

“Love dwells and reigns in every heart in heaven. The heart of God is the original source of divine love, existing inherently, like light in the sun. From God, love flows necessarily towards all inhabitants of heaven.”

“That which was in the heart on earth as but a grain of mustard-seed, shall be as a great tree in heaven. The soul that in this world had only a little spark of divine love in it, in heaven shall be, as it were, turned into a bright and ardent flame, like the sun in its fullest brightness, when it has no spot upon it.”

“In heaven all shall be united together in very near and dear relations... In heaven all shall have property and ownership in each other.”

“[In heaven people] will have no doubt of the love of each other. They shall have no fear that the declarations...of love are hypocritical; but shall be perfectly satisfied of the sincerity and strength of each other’s affection, as much as if there were a window in every breast, so that everything in the heart could be seen. There shall be no such thing as flattery...in heaven, but there perfect sincerity shall reign through all and in all. Everyone will be just what he seems to be, and will really have all the love that he seems to have.”

~Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) in “Heaven Is a World of Love”

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

~Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968), civil rights activist and Baptist minister

“If a person doesn’t love the church, they don’t love Jesus.”

~Voddie Baucham (1969-2025), former Dean of Theology at African Christian University (Zambia)

“To dwell in love with saints above— Oh that will be glory! But to dwell below with saints we know— Ah! That’s a different story!”

~Christopher J.H. Wright, Anglican clergyman and author

SERMON – “We Believe in the Resurrection of the Dead and the Life of the World to Come”

– Pastor Don Willeman

SERMON PASSAGE – *Ephesians 2:1-3:13 (ESV)*

Ephesians 2

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

¹¹ Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached the peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were

near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Ephesians 3

¹ For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— ² assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, ³ how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. ⁴ When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. ⁶ This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷ Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power. ⁸ To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, ¹⁰ so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. ¹³ So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.