



Getting the big picture of all of Scripture

Part 1: The Reality of Death

Main Idea: Death is the one appointment no one can cancel. It serves as a "teacher" that reminds us of our frailty and the urgency of our choices.

- **Read Psalm 39:4-5.** Why do you think the Psalmist asks God to help him "know his end"? How would your daily priorities change if you truly viewed your life as a "mere breath"?
- **Discussion:** The sermon mentions several cultural "euphemisms" for death (e.g., "passed on," "slipped away"). Why are we so hesitant to use the word "death"?

Part 2: Three Worldviews vs. The Biblical Truth

The sermon highlighted three common cultural views of death. Compare them to the Biblical reality:

View	Song - Core Belief	Biblical Response
Nihilism	"Dust in the Wind"—Life ends at the grave.	Mathew 10:28 Can kill the body but not the soul.
Reincarnation	"The Highwayman"—Life is a cycle of recycling.	Heb 9:27: It is appointed for man to die <i>once</i> , then judgment.
Purification	"Purgatory"—You can pay for sin after death.	Luke 23:43: "Today you will be with me in Paradise."

- **Reflection:** Which of these cultural views do you see most often in your friends, family, or social media? How does the Bible's "one life, one choice" message change the stakes?

Part 3: Heaven and Hell

Main Idea: Jesus spoke about Hell frequently because He did not want us to go there. (**2 Peter 3:9**) Heaven is not just a "location" but a "home" where we are with our Father.

- **Defining Death:**
 - **Physical Death:** Separation of the soul from the body.
 - **Spiritual Death:** Eternal separation of the soul and ultimately body from God.
- Examine the contrast between Heaven and Hell in scripture.

A Contrast of Realities

Feature	Hell (The Second Death)	Heaven (Our Eternal Home)
Primary State	Separation: Total isolation from the presence of God.	Intimacy: Face-to-face communion with the Redeemer.
Environment	Darkness: Described as "outer darkness" and a "blazing furnace."	Light: No need for the sun; God's glory provides the light.
Physical/Emotional	Anguish: Weeping and gnashing of teeth; eternal punishment.	Rest: No more death, mourning, crying, or pain.
Purpose	Judgment: Prepared for the devil and his angels.	Inheritance: Specifically prepared for God's children.
Stability	Conscious Torment: A place of "chains" and "blackest darkness."	Secure City: A city with foundations; a place of eternal joy.

- **The Nature of Home:** Read **John 14:1-3**. Jesus uses the language of a "Father's House." What are the characteristics of a "home" that make you feel safe and loved? How does that change your perspective of Heaven?
- **Rewards:** Read **1 Corinthians 3:12-15**. We are saved by grace, but our "works" are tested by fire. What does it mean to build with "gold and silver" versus "wood and straw" in your daily life?

Part 4: The "Stearns Suggestions"

1. **Stewardship:** Are your earthly affairs (wills, insurance, directives) in order? How is getting these organized an act of love for your family?
2. **Legacy:** If you had to write your own eulogy today, what would it say? What do you *want* it to say ten years from now?
3. **Grief:** Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to "give you swimming lessons" in your waves of grief? Who can you reach out to for support?

Part 5: The "Donut" vs. The Gospel

The closing story warned us against offering "pastries" (superficial comfort) when people are "starving for a Savior."
(see story at end of document)

- **The Penn Jillette Challenge:** How much do you have to hate someone to not tell them about how to get to Heaven if you really believe it? (Discuss)
- **The Step of Faith:** If you haven't made the decision to follow Jesus, the sermon gave four steps: **Recognize** (your sin), **Repent** (change direction), and **Receive** (the gift of Jesus), and **Remain** (in Christ). **Acts 4:27**

My Next Step

What is one specific thing you will do this week in response to this message?

- *Examples: Update my will, have a hard but loving conversation with a loved one, sign up for Search, or invite a friend to discuss these questions.*

The "Donut" vs. The Gospel

Imagine you are a visitor who has walked into a church for the first time in years. You are broken. Your marriage is failing, you've lost your sense of purpose, and you feel a spiritual weight in your chest that you can't describe. You've come here as a last resort because you've heard there is a "way to be saved," and you are desperate to find it.

You sit in the back pew, weeping quietly. After the service, a long-time member—someone who has been in this church for forty years—approaches you. He sees your tears. He knows exactly what they mean because he was once where you are. He knows the "Roadmap to Heaven" by heart.

You look up at him, your voice trembling. "I don't know what to do. I feel so lost. Is there hope? Is there actually a way to get to God?"

The member feels a tug in his heart to tell you about the Gospel. He knows he should explain that "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." He knows he should tell you how to repent and put your trust in Christ.

But then, he looks around. He thinks, *'If I start talking about "sin" and "repentance," I might sound too intense. I don't want to make you uncomfortable on her first day. If I tell her there's only one way to Heaven, she might think I'm being "preachy" or judgmental. I'll just be a friendly face instead.'*

So, he smiles warmly and says, "We're so glad you're here. We have a great coffee social in the hall right now. Why don't you come grab a donut and meet some nice people? It'll take your mind off things."

He walks you to the coffee line, talking about the church's new building project, while the map to heaven remains folded up in his pocket. He gives you a pastry when you were starving for a Savior.

Books:

- A study of Heaven: Heaven by Randy Alcorn
- Creation of a Life Plan: Living Forward by Michael Hyatt and Daniel Harkavy