

October 2nd, 2022
Heaven: Week 1

The crazy thing for all of us is this... As Christians, we all know where we're going, we just don't know what it's really going to be like!

It's a place where truly... Mystery and Majesty collide!

And it stands to reason that because we really don't know what Heaven is really like, we don't long for the home God has created for us!

The importance is not so much of WHAT we'll do THEN, it's more about WHAT are we doing NOW to prepare!

In the first half of our series we'll talk about the Mystery of Heaven. In fact, this series may frustrate some of you because the Bible doesn't give us Full Detail about heaven.

Both believer and unbeliever alike have the question of... What are we going to do in heaven for all eternity?

Honestly, I think most people believe it's going to be BORING! It's going to be ONE perpetual church service.

Listen, TWO of the great deceptions that Satan wants to promote are...

- Heaven is not Real
- Heaven is Boring

The question really isn't do people not think about Heaven, the question really is... People don't know what to really think about Heaven!

I know the older we get, the more we think about Eternity! When I do a funeral, it's not quiet, just in respect of the lost loved one, most of the room is questioning their departure... And what truly is NEXT!

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV)

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart...

The truth is, you don't become an eternal being once you die, you're already an eternal being!

We've become really good at telling people HOW to get to heaven, but not so good at telling them what Heaven will truly be like!

What's the Goal? What do we need to Know?

Heaven provides HOPE for the Future, but maybe more importantly, for our Present.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 (NIV)

Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be *uninformed* about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no Hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

- A. The power of HOPE changes grief for today and most certainly tomorrow!
- B. Eternity MOTIVATES people!

2 Peter 3:13 (NIV)

But in keeping with his Promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

- I. Heaven is BETTER!

CS Lewis writes that it's hard for us to imagine just how good Heaven will be because we have fallen much too in love with the pleasures here!

- A. Heaven is a Paradise

Revelation 2:7 (NIV)

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

- 1.) Paradise of Sight

Revelation 22:1-3 (NIV)

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the Throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse...

- 2.) Paradise of Sound

2 Corinthians 12:3-4 (NIV)

And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—was caught up to Paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell.

Revelation 19:1, 6-7 (NIV)

After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God..." Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory..."

3.) Paradise of Peace

No Stress. No interruptions. No Texts. No calls in the middle of the night. Our world seemingly spiraling out of control.

Revelation 21:4 (NIV)

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

4.) Paradise of Stories

Matthew 25 tells us that people will be assured by what they did, that they will be in Heaven! But because they thought of themselves rather than others they will be rejected.

Luke 23:39-43 (NIV): The Crucifixion of Jesus

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Question: What will be told of your story?

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS: WEEK 1

What do I really know about Heaven?

To get your group started this first week, go around the room and introduce yourself and let people know something about you!

Let's ease into this week's topic... People probably have all kinds of ideas about heaven so let's stick to the teaching this week and let more unfold in the coming weeks!

Discussion Questions:

1. How have you tried to describe Heaven to someone? How sure are you?
2. What do you imagine we'll do in Heaven for all eternity? How would you describe that to a non-follower of Jesus?
3. Comment on this phrase Pastor Jim used: "The question really isn't do people not think about Heaven, the question really is... People don't know what to really think about Heaven!"
4. How does Heaven provide Hope for your Present?
5. What's one thing you're most excited to experience in Heaven? Sights, Sounds, Peace?
6. What's your Story? [Maybe a few could comment on this question each week until everyone has shared their story!]