

Heaven

Home Sweet Home

April 8, 2018 am

HDBC

When our children were young, Jan and I established a tradition that when we arrived home we would often say the words, ***Home, Sweet Home***. We never planned it, but just started doing it. Often one of us would say ***Home*** and then wait for one of our daughters to finish it. Jan and I still often say it today.

We wanted our kids to understand that ***Home*** was a special place. No matter where we had been, there was no place like home. Our home was our refuge. It was a place of safety and security. It was where family happened.

One of the first metaphors Jesus used of Heaven was that of a home. Jesus wants us to understand that Heaven will not like be like staying with a distant relative, in a rented Air BNB or in a fine hotel. Heaven is home!

There are some things that make home, home! Things that allow us to relax and be ourselves. Things that give us a sense of **security, satisfaction** and **significance**. This is what Heaven is like. There are a number of things that will be present in Heaven that will make it home for you and me. These are **personal, precious, priceless**.

This morning I want to whet your appetite for Heaven by sharing a few of the things we will find in heaven. **This is not an exhaustive list**. There are many other things there. We will talk about many of them in the next few weeks. But, for this day, I want to share these five things that are there.

1. Our Names (Luke 10:20)

On one occasion, Jesus sent seventy of his followers to preach, teach & heal. When they returned they were excited about what God had done through them. They reported to the Lord that ***even the demons are subject to us***. That was a big deal to them, as it should have been.

Jesus responded, *Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*

Your name is important. It represents you and will always be tied to you!

Think about the importance of your name!

1) Name signifies ownership

Title to your car. My name in my books. Our DVDs.

2) Name signifies accomplishment

Name on diploma or degree. Fayetteville sidewalks. Joy and Pappaw.

3) Name signifies participation

Championship team has a banner with names of players.
Vietnam Memorial Wall.

4) Name signifies that you belong

I have recently been asked to serve on the board of trustees for WBU. At my first meeting I entered the room and found a space at the table with my name on it. It signified that I belonged at the table.

I can get on a plane only because my name is on the list.

Jesus said, *your names will be found in Heaven.* What an awesome way to express that we belong in Heaven. When you arrive, no one will have to ask your name or who you are looking for. Your name is already there. You are expected. **It indicates also that we are important to the Lord.**

2. Our Citizenship (Philippians 3:20)

But our citizenship is in heaven,

In this passage he declares that our citizenship is in Heaven. Heaven is our home. We are strangers in a foreign land and will continue to be so, as long as we are in this life. Only in Heaven will we experience the absolute sensation of being **at home**.

Most countries require that I have a visa on my passport in order to enter. For example, I had to have a visa to enter China. But it came with limitations on the amount of time I could stay. Same with Argentina, Colombia, Malawi, Tanzania and most other countries that I have been to. The visa allows me to enter, but also requires that I leave.

But, when I return to the U.S. I do not need a visa. My name is on a passport which declares that I am a citizen of the United States. It not only allows me to enter, but to stay here permanently. Why? This is my home.

This requires a radical new way of thinking. We think and act as if this is truly our home, and heaven is just a place we will go to when we are finished here. This is the real show and heaven is just the after-party. That is not so.

Paul would have us think in just the opposite way. This is the prelude, the setup, the preparation. Heaven is the main thing. Everything in this life is an introduction to everything in that life.

If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world. CS Lewis

In heaven you will find your name already engraved there, signifying that you were expected. What a cool thing to know that you were not an afterthought. You were not a replacement for another who did not show up.

3. **Our People** (Hebrews 12:22-24)

Heaven will be populated with people you know. No one will be a stranger in heaven. **Have you ever walked into a room worrying about whether or not you would see anyone you knew?**

You don't have to worry about that when it comes to heaven.

*Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was **gathered to his people**.* Genesis 25:8

And Isaac breathed his last, and he died and was gathered to his people, old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him. Genesis 35:29

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³ and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven. Heb 12:22-23

The assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven are other believers who have gotten to heaven before us. Parents, spouses, children, grandparents, friends. All believers who have died will be there. Every time a believer arrives in heaven there is a reunion. That will be the case for you.

Our names will be there.

Our citizenship will be there.

Our people will be there.

4. Our Reward (Matthew 5:12)

Jesus said, *Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven,*

Right there in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus makes reference to the rewards for believers. But he also points out where they are kept and will be given out. They are in Heaven and will be there, reserved for you.

What will they be? There are many ideas of what heavenly rewards are going to be like. It seems to me that there is a divinely inspired mystery when it comes to our rewards. Here is what we know.

- 1) They are real. Jesus makes this clear.
- 2) They are great. You will not be disappointed with it.
- 3) They will only be given to us in heaven. Don't expect it in this life.
- 4) They will be earned in this present life. We act now for rewards later.
- 5) They may involve things (treasure) as well as position (authority over)

The New Testament over and over calls us to act in this life with a view to what it is producing for us in the next life. Rewards, treasures, authorities.

Our names are there. Our citizenship is there.

Our people are there. Our reward is there.

5. Our Savior (Colossians 3:1-2)

*If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, **where Christ is** seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*

Notice some key phrases:

If then you have been raised with Christ. This is a clear reference to those who are born again believers in Christ. When you gave your life to Christ you were raised from the dead to be alive with Christ. There was a spiritual resurrection that happened when you were born again.

Seek the things that are above.

Paul calls us to desire heavenly things above earthly things. The *things above* refers to the heavenly realm and specifically refers to the spiritual values that characterize Christ, such as tenderness, kindness, patience, purity, etc.

How are we to seek the things above? It starts in the mind.

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

The present tense indicates continual action. This means that we must not only seek heaven, but we must think heaven.

Paul knew that what we think has a great impact on how we act. We are called to lift our eyes and consider the realm above. We must resist the temptation to focus all of our attention on this world. Heaven is not simply a future destination but is a current reality that needs to occupy our attention in the present.

Where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Jesus is in heaven. At the right hand of God. This is pictured as a place of honor but also speaks of His current ministry. He is interceding for us. **The point** I want to make here is

that Jesus, our Savior, is in Heaven. That is motivation enough to seek heaven because he is there.

Randy Alcorn relates the following story in his book on Heaven.

In 1952, Florence Chadwick stepped into the waters of the Pacific Ocean off Catalina Island, determined to swim to the shore of the mainland in California. She'd already been the first woman to swim the English Channel both ways. The weather was foggy and chilly; she could hardly see the boats accompanying her. Still, she swam for fifteen hours. When she begged to be taken out of the water along the way, her mother, in a boat alongside, told her she was close and that she could make it.

Finally, physically and emotionally exhausted, she stopped swimming and was pulled out. It wasn't until she was on the boat that she discovered the shore was less than half a mile away. At a news conference the next day she said *All I could see was fog . . . I think if I could have seen the shore, I would have made it.*

If she could have seen the shore, she could have made it. For us, the shore is Jesus. Hebrews makes it clear that we are to look to Jesus as we run our earthly race. It is impossible to look to Jesus without looking to Heaven because that is where He is.

I want to challenge you to rethink Heaven, in terms of the things that are there. Those things will naturally cause us to be drawn in that direction.

Your **Name**,
 Your **Citizenship**,
 Your **People**,
 Your **Reward**,
 Your **Savior**.