

## **03 | The Reality of Heaven**

ETERNITY Series

Wow. Well, congratulations. If you made it to this teaching, that means that you made it through teaching part two--The Reality of Hell. And here you are. Now you get to hear some of the good news, as well.

And it's important, by the way, that we talk about the reality of hell first before we talk about the reality of heaven, which is what we're going to talk about in this part. Because when you understand the bad news, it really helps you to understand and appreciate the good news more. Right? Picture if you boarded a small plane and you took off and the pilot said in the radio system, the pilot said, "Just so you all know, I want to let you guys know that we do have enough safety parachutes for every single person on board." You would think, "Oh, that's nice. I appreciate them doing that." And then if he followed up immediately with, "By the way, the plane's going down." Now, all of a sudden, your reaction to him saying that everybody has a parachute went from, "Oh, that's nice," to that is everything, right? That is the game changer between me and utter destruction. And now all of a sudden, your appreciation goes from a nice courtesy to, that changes everything, right? Which is part of what, why

we wanted to lay it out or why I wanted to lay it out this way, which is where we talk about hell first and understand the bad news. So now as we talk about heaven, there's a deeper level of gratitude, understanding what we're saved from, right? Because there is a reality of hell, but it makes us all the more grateful that Jesus, in a sense, purchased a parachute for us with His own blood, right? He received the punishment so that we don't have to, and our job is simply to receive it and put it on.

When you have a proper understanding of heaven, you have more joy in living for the kingdom because you understand that no matter what happens here on this earth, no matter what storm you go through, no matter what issue you go through, nothing can take away that you're going to be with Jesus in eternity in heaven, the best place you could ever be forever. And in fact, that's what Jesus did, as well. He was able to endure because of the joy set before him. Look at Hebrews 12:2. It says, "Looking into Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross despising the shame has sat down at the right hand of God. So, notice Jesus endured the torture and the humiliation, despising the shame of being on the cross because of the joy that was set before Him. He endured the cross. And what is that joy that was set before Him?

That joy is that Him and I, Him and us, we get to be in heaven with Him forever. That He had a mission that He was on, which is to save us, which is to help us take from our sin and put

us on the path of righteousness so that we could ultimately be in heaven. And Jesus endured the cross because of that specific joy that was set before Him. And so, we're able to endure things as well when we have the joy set before us, which is that for Him it was that He gets to be with us in heaven for eternity. For us, it's that we get to be with Him in eternity in heaven. When we have that set before us, then we're able to endure more hardship without losing on the joy that was set before us. And so even during storms, we can have peace that surpasses understanding and joy beyond what anyone can comprehend. Because no matter what storm may come your way, no one can take that away from you, that you will be in heaven forever with Jesus. When you understand more about heaven, you're also more likely to be motivated to tell people about it, right?

Have you ever been to a great food place? I mean, a really great food place that the food is so good that you can't help but tell people about it, right? You're always like an advocate for this food place. You're like one of their top marketers telling people, "You got to go to this restaurant." Well, because believers often know so little about heaven or we don't think about it too much, it's almost like we tell people about heaven as if we were telling them about a restaurant that we've never been to, right? So, we're saying, "Hey, you got to go here. It's the best." Right? And then the person will say, "Oh, great, what do they have? Is it like a barbecue place?" And we say, "I don't know." Right? "Well, what

kind of food do they have?" "I have no clue." "Is it a sit-down place?" "I'm not sure." Right? And we tell people about heaven in that way. It's like we're like, "You got to go to heaven. It's the best." "Well, what's it like? What do we do there?" "I have no idea." Right? "But it's the best." It's better if we understand what it is that we're advocating for. And when you understand it, then you're able to speak about it better and be a better advocate for it.

Some people ...I think many people probably picture heaven as like the most boring church they've ever gone to, except it's forever. Right? That's probably what they picture it like. I remember one time teaching in a small congregation. Maybe there was like 35 people in the room, and I had said I was closing with something in particular. I said, "Hey, let me close with this verse." And then a couple of minutes after that I said, "Actually, let me share one more thing." And I remember when I said that. And by the way, just in case you don't know ... If you've never spoken in front of people, when you speak in front of people, you can actually see and catch more than people would think you can. And so, I was preaching and speaking in the sanctuary. And the lady when I said, "Actually, let me say one more thing," after I close, she visibly was irritated with me, arms crossed, going like this, like shaking her head like that and making little scoffs and sounds, right? Because she wanted it to be done. And I know, by the way, I know she was irritated about it because the week before, she had also let me

know that that I need to close a little bit sooner. And so, and then there was one other time, in fact, this one was just recent where I was speaking and I ran into somebody and they said--it was an interesting conversation--but they said, "Ah, you preached today." And I said, "Yeah, I did." They said, "Yeah, it was a bit long." And I said, "Yeah," which was true by the way. So, I saidm "Yeah. Yeah, that is true. It was a bit long." So, I know in church sometimes we're just ready to get out. In fact, I know for sure that when the pastor starts closing, right? When they say, "Let me close with this...", that's when everyone starts packing their bags, right? That's when you put everything in the perfect position so that you're immediately ready to leave and time that thing with perfection so that you don't waste even a moment extra in church, right? Or often when the pastor, a leader, will say, "In Jesus' name, Amen." And then they start giving the closing announcements and the reminders, people are already darting out the door. This happened this last weekend as I was giving the closing announcements and reminders. Many people left out the door and I don't blame them. I'm not upset about it. But people often figure or feel like heaven is like that boring church service that you're in, except there's superglue on the seat. You don't get to go anywhere. You're just in this church service that's boring, that's terrible ... forever. And that's not what heaven is like. Heaven is not going to be boring. It's not going to be miserable. It's not going to be terrible. In fact, it's going to be greater

and better than anything you've experienced here on Earth for all of eternity.

One question people want to know is, do we have a body in heaven or are we just some kind of wandering, floating, heart playing, spiritual essence in heaven? Right? Well, we know we don't have our earthly bodies, our old bodies. But does that mean that we have no body?

We'll look at Revelation 6:11. Revelation 6:11 talks about how a white robe is given to each one of the martyrs in heaven. There was a group of martyrs crying out in that passage, and it says that a white robe was given to each one of them. Well, what was the white robe given to them for? Was it given to them so that their spiritual essence could kind of swim through it and around it? No, probably not. It was probably given to them to wear, meaning that we do have some sort of body in heaven, a restored and a renewed one.

Now also remember that in Genesis 1:27, it says that, "...God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." So, we are created in the image of God. So, we actually look like God, some of us more than others, we actually look like God and we're created in his image. Right? So, we have hands because He has hands. We have eyes because He has eyes. We are created in the image of God. Matthew 8:11 says this, "And I say to you that many will come from the east and west . . .," catch this . . . this is so cool, "... and sit down."

How can you sit down if you don't have a body? But it says, "... and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven." How cool is this? This is saying when we get to eternity, it says many people will come from the east and the west and in heaven, in the kingdom of heaven, they will actually sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Could you imagine that? That in heaven, you and I actually get to sit down with some of these incredible biblical historical figures and talk with them and interact with them. Think about this--Moses, Samuel, David, Ruth, Peter, Paul, Timothy. Right? All these amazing people from the Bible that we will get to interact with them in heaven and even ask questions ... have conversations, right?

I'd love to ask David, "What exactly was going through your mind as you ran after Goliath?" Right? "It really seems like you had zero doubt. But did you? Was there any part of you that was that was questioning or concerned or was it really just totally there?" My guess is probably actually that he was totally full of faith. But there are a bunch of scenarios that I would love to ask and interact with these people. And we get to. We get to interact with these people. And you've got to think about even how the conversation will go with some of these people in heaven that you get to ask them all these questions. "So, when you were on Earth, how did you do this? How how was it serving the Lord in that way?" And I wonder if they'll ask us the same question. "So, in what way did you ... Did you really run after the Lord on Earth?" And I wonder if we're going to

be embarrassed to respond to them. Right? To let them know. "Well, you know ... I uh ... the biggest thing that I did was I did go to church most ... Most Sundays, you know, other than when stuff kind of came up." And that's kind of our response. And remember, many people that even think they're serving the Lord like we talked about in the last one, they will be surprised when they get to Jesus and Jesus says, "I don't know, you depart from me, you practice lawlessness." But I wonder what we'll get to say to them, but how cool is that? We'll get to sit and interact with these actual people.

Genesis 1:26 says this. It says, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, according to Our likeness.'" So, catch this--we're not just made in His image, right? Which means that we look like God, but we're made in His likeness, which means that we are like God outside of the sin nature. God doesn't have a sin nature, but we are like God. The reason we can feel and reason and think and interact and have emotions is because we're made in the likeness of God. We see all throughout the Bible that God is not a robot. God has a way that He interacts and a way that He feels and goes back and forth in conversation with people throughout the word. We see that--that God has that and we have that, as well.

Even when we get to heaven, we're not all going to be just all robots that have no personality or no thoughts or no emotions at all, that we're all just robots that don't that don't have anything to us other than we just do what



we're supposed to. No, we are going to be able to interact. We are going to be able to have some personality up there, but we won't have the sin nature. That is the difference-maker there. A lot of people feel like heaven is just going to be some foggy, kind of not really fully conscious dream that we have where we're kind of in there in heaven, but it's kind of a cloudy scenario and it kind of just feels like, again, like we're this spiritual wandering essence that happens, but it won't be like that. We'll be totally aware. We'll be more clear-headed and present, in fact, than we've ever been here on this earth. I used to personally be concerned. I thought once I make it to heaven, what happens if I then sin or I then make the wrong decision? Right? Will I then get kicked out of heaven? Is that how it works? And the answer to that is, "no." You are either there in heaven forever or you're not. And that cannot change. We have one shot that determines where we go forever, and that's here on this earth. And then once we're there, we are there, and the sin nature is gone from us. But if we're in hell, we're also in hell forever. There is no switching back and forth between it.

Look at Revelation 6:10. It says this, "And they ... ", talking about those who are martyred ... It says, "And they cried with a loud voice saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth." So, they're asking the people that martyred us--the people that killed us--are still walking around the earth. The wicked are still prevailing on the

earth. They're still doing wickedness. They're still harming believers in this way. How long will this last? And I want to point out a few things. These are people that have been martyred, and they're now in heaven. They're not here on earth anymore. And they're crying out to the Lord and they're asking a question.

And so, notice a few points. Number one, they don't know the answer to the question that they're asking, meaning that we're not going to be all knowing, which is a good thing. We're not going to know everything. We're not going to become--as soon as we die--that we just understand everything. It won't be so. Which again, is a good thing. Because if you're all knowing, then you don't need to discover anything and you have nothing to discover. But we will have all of eternity, the rest of our existence to discover things. I believe we'll be able to explore more of creation, right? Things that the telescopes can't even reach to, that the telescopes can't show us. I believe that we'll be able to see the fullness of God's creation and be able to even have some exploration and discover some things that God's created that we wouldn't be able to discover here on Earth.

Another thing to notice is that even though they don't know everything, they're aware of what's happening on Earth, currently. When you get to heaven, it's not that you become totally aware of what happens on Earth, right? The Bible even says that all of heaven rejoices when one sinner repents, and so heaven is actually aware of what happens and what is

happening on Earth. And so, the people in heaven are aware of what's happening on Earth. The third thing is they remember what happened to them while they were on Earth. And so, they remember their life. They remember, "Yeah, I know who martyred me. It was that dude right there." Right? And he's still walking the earth. They remember what happened in their life. I've heard it said that in heaven, our memories make us more grateful because we're grateful that we had the opportunity to come to the Lord and ultimately to be in heaven and receive salvation. But in hell, our memories torment us because we remember that we had opportunities to make the right choice and opportunities to receive the Lord. And yet we didn't. And so, our memories will be a part of us in heaven, and we will remember what it is that we did. And we will also wish that we did everything that we could to do our part because we got one shot here.

Look at what John 14:1-2 says. It says, "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God. Believe in me, also. In My Father's house, there are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." So, Jesus saying let not your heart be troubled. In My Father's house there are many mansions. Then He says this. "If it were not so, I would have told you." He's saying, if in My Father's house there were a bunch of Motel 6's that you're going to be housing in, I would have told you that, right? I would have communicated if it's a bunch of shacks that you get to live in, I would have said that to you. But He said, but I'm telling the

truth. Right? In My Father's house there are many mansions and I go to prepare a place for you. Hopefully, this encourages you and makes you feel better. But think about this. The One who created your capacity to enjoy and to have pleasure and comfort in all of that is the same One who's preparing heaven to be incredible for you. He's the same One. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you." Right? That's part of what makes us so grateful for our salvation is who are we that Jesus would be working to prepare a place for us? Who are we that He would honor us in that way or be so kind to us in that way? But that's part of the love of our Savior. But He's saying, "I go to prepare a place for you." He's preparing a place for you, and it is the same Creator, the same One that prepared--or pardon me--created your ability to enjoy. He knows how to get you to enjoy things. He knows the way that you enjoy things here on this earth, He knows how that works. He created that capacity. And it's He's the same one that's creating heaven specifically to be a reward for you for walking uprightly. And the truth is, like He said--there are many mansions waiting for us.

Look at Matthew 6:19 through 21. It says this, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth." We read this in, I think the first teaching. "But do not lay up treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourself treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroy. Nor where thieves break in and steal for where your treasure is there your heart will be also." Notice Jesus is saying

that we can actually lay up treasure in heaven. Now, how do we do that? How do we lay up treasure in heaven, right? He's saying, "Don't focus on laying up treasure here on earth where moth and rust destroy, but instead lay up treasures for yourself in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal." So, Jesus is saying that we have the ability to lay up treasure in heaven. And how do we do that? Well, it's based on what we do here on this earth. Right? And this is part of why understanding the reality of heaven is so important or the reality of eternity is that you make different decisions. Right? You really do. By the way you process things, you realize, wait a second, I could do what God is saying. I could sow things here on this earth that will actually reap a harvest in eternity and lay up treasures for us in eternity.

Now, what do those treasures look like? I don't know. It doesn't quite say. Maybe it's that one person's mansion has a pool and a waterslide and one doesn't. I have no idea. But whatever it is, I know this Jesus is saying it is better for you to lay up treasures in heaven. This is, by the way, one of the reasons why we should be, as believers, willing to sow seed and do what's right before God, even if no one else is looking. The Bible says that when you do a charitable deed, it says, "Don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing. And when you do a charitable deed, do it in secret. Not before men, but before your father, who sees in the secret place, and your father will reward you openly." See, we

can do everything we do in our life to be seen by people. Right? Some of us have this need that every time we do a charitable deed or anything to advance the Kingdom of God, we feel like we need to post it on social media and make sure that people know it. By the way, I've had this urge that sometimes I'll pray for people and I'll feel like I need to tell them that I'm praying for them. And maybe it's because I want them to know I support them and all that. And I remember one time I was about to tell somebody, "Just so you know, I'm praying for you." And I don't think there's anything wrong with letting them know that. But I remember the Lord told me in that moment, as I was about to say it, I felt like the Lord just nudged me and said, "You know, you don't need to tell them you're praying for them, for your prayers to be effective." It's almost like I thought that the idea of me praying for them would hopefully inspire them to make better choices, but that that's not even necessary. It's not that I need to try to make it happen in the natural and make sure they know about it, but that the things that I do in secret actually affect the things that play out in the open. Right? It's the same when we serve. When we serve, sometimes we serve in a way that we want to get acknowledged by people, and sometimes we do and sometimes we don't. But when you don't get acknowledged by people, do you have eternity in mind? And remember, it doesn't matter if I never receive a single ounce of credit or if I never receive any type of payment or any type of gift or anything at all. It doesn't matter if I receive any of that because I'm doing this unto the Lord

knowing that I'm laying up treasure in heaven, not just here on this earth. I'm laying up treasure that moth and rust don't destroy. That when I get up there, it's going to be forever and ever lasting, right? That's what we're doing.

Picture this. If you got put into a little scenario ... I don't know if any of you have ever played, "Mario Party," but I really like that game. Most of you probably have not, but it's a bunch of little mini games and games that you play. But imagine if you got put into this little scenario game where somebody put you in this arena and there was a bunch of treasures and prizes there and they said, "Hey, all the treasures that you put into this basket or into this big bucket or this big area over here, you get to keep after 24 hours when we release you from this arena and you get to keep those forever." But instead of putting them all in that area, instead you're just playing with them right there. Right? And you're not focusing on getting it into that spot because you're just enjoying it in the moment. That would be called foolishness to prioritize the enjoyment in the moment of treasures instead of laying them aside. And yeah, maybe you don't get to play with them for a short period of time, but then you get to take them with you forever. And we do this all the time here on Earth. We build treasure in heaven and toys that we want to play with here on Earth. And I'm going to be a broken record here as I bring these things up, because I want to be clear, there's nothing wrong with having nice things, but the Bible is very

clear. There is something wrong with prioritizing those nice things over the Kingdom of God and acting as if the nice things here and now are more important than even the treasures in heaven. It's not wisdom. You're going to regret if you get to heaven, and you spent your whole life on things that don't get to go with you. You will regret it, but of course you will still be in heaven. So, there's joy and endless joy at that. I hope this blessed you a little bit more than the one about hell.

Actually, maybe the one about hell was more needed for you, but it's good that we understand heaven so that when we talk to people, we don't make it sound like heaven is just a place you should go. But it's not only a place you should go. It's the place that we should long to go because it's better than anything that we could possibly experience here on Earth. It's not a foggy experience we're going to have in heaven. We're going to be clearheaded, present in heaven, understanding this is the real thing. This is the reality here. Almost like, again, waking up from a dream that you thought felt like reality, but then realizing, "No, this is the real picture." And we're going to be able to sit down and have conversations and interact with each other and discover new things and learn and ask questions and all of that. And it's going to be incredible for all of eternity. So as a good person, as a godly person, be sure to make sure that not only are you on your way there, but also that you're prioritizing heaven in the decision that



you're making not only again for you so that you get rewards in heaven, but even more importantly than that, so that the people around you end up there, too. How selfish would it be if we took our ticket to heaven and said, "As long as I have a ticket, that's good enough for me, regardless of where my neighbor goes." Right? That's so selfish and terrible. We need to prioritize other people and heaven is going to be incredible.

It's going to be amazing. It's going to be for eternity. And we are going to get there in Jesus' name. You are going to get there. I am going to get there in Jesus' name. And we're going to be in that real moment and we're going to be grateful that we spent our life not laying up treasures here on earth where moth and rust destroy, but in heaven we're neither moth and rust destroy.

Let's pray and as always, if you're at a place where you can pray as well, even if you just have to mutter under your breath, take a moment as I pray and just ask the Lord to strengthen you to live understanding the reality of heaven.

So, first of all, Lord, we thank You for the ability to go to Heaven. Lord, that's not through our own works, but it's through the grace of Jesus and Jesus' blood that has washed us clean. We thank you, God, that You saved us by grace, that we can't earn it, that we don't need to earn it, God, but that You saved us through grace. And our job is to receive the salvation and live in it, God. But I thank

You, Lord, that we will end up in Heaven, God, because of Your great gift, not because of our good works. So, we thank You first and foremost for that. And then we ask You to help us, Lord. Help us to live prioritizing heaven and the things of heaven and the Kingdom of Heaven, Lord, and even with our neighbors and the people around us, our coworkers, our family members, not only to store up treasure in heaven for us, Lord, but that should even be secondary, God, to making sure that the people around us, God are getting there, Lord. That's more important, Lord. So, help us to prioritize Your kingdom, Your will in Jesus mighty name, we pray. Amen.