

Is Heaven for Real?

June 10, 2018

I **SLIDE** So far, this year...

A) Review

- 1) New year needs a new mindset
- 2) God equips us to engage the world not to shy away from it
- 3) The most important thing we can do is the very next thing God asks us to do
- 4) Live a life worthy of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ
- 5) Finally, putting into practice the advice of Paul and Peter

B) **SLIDE** One other message:

- 1) When the story becomes real
- 2) When everything in the Bible, when everything that Jesus has said becomes real, life changes
- 3) None of these messages will make any difference if we do not believe in the reality of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection
- 4) We will find it difficult to live God's advice if we do not believe that advice to be TRUTH

C) **SLIDE 1 Peter 3:12 (NIV)** For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

- 1) Do we believe God's eyes are on the righteous, or do we hope His eyes are on the righteous?
- 2) Do we believe God's eyes are on us, or do we hope His eyes are on us?
- 3) Do we believe God hears our prayers, or do we hope He hears our prayers?
- 4) Do we believe God is against evil, or we hope He is against evil?
- 5) Do we believe God is for those who believe and accept Jesus, or do we hope He is for us?

D) **SLIDE Romans 5:3-5 (NJB)** ³ Not only that; let us exult, too, in our hardships, understanding that hardship develops perseverance, ⁴ and perseverance develops a tested character, something that gives us hope, ⁵ and a hope which will not let us down, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.

- 1) Hope that does not disappoint is a hope that is born from what we believe and know to be true
- 2) It is not a hope that hopes what Jesus said is true

II Why this now?

A) **SLIDE** Movie

- 1) Heaven Is for Real
 - a) Watched it again Friday with some of our grandchildren
 - b) True story of a boy taken into heaven during an operation
 - c) His story caused a great deal of controversy in the church
 - d) Not because the boy said He went to heaven and saw Jesus, his grandfather, and his unborn sister
 - e) But because of the idea of heaven itself
 - f) Even the boy's father, who is a minister, is torn about the reality of heaven
 - g) At the end, he preaches that heaven is for real
- 2) That struck me
 - a) How can we believe in Jesus and not believe in heaven?
 - b) Not in the idea of heaven but in heaven itself
 - c) Why did Jesus die if we are not going to join Him in paradise?
 - d) Then I realized that many believe in Jesus and HOPE heaven is for real
 - e) I have felt that way
 - f) I have experienced times when I prayed and HOPED Jesus was listening
 - g) Is forgiveness real, or do we hope it is real?
 - h) That is not what Peter is telling us

- i) **SLIDE** He wants us to go forward with the BELIEF that Jesus hears us and sees us
 - j) He wants us to go into the world knowing God's eyes are on us
 - k) **SLIDE** He wants us to live each day knowing that nothing escapes God's attention
 - l) He wants us to walk in the assurance that God will reward the righteous and punish the wicked
- B) **SLIDE** Therefore, Peter tells us ¹⁵ ...in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,
- 1) We are to set Christ apart from everything else in this world as our Lord
 - 2) To "set apart" means we make Jesus different and special from all other things
 - 3) If we set Him apart as our Christ and Lord, then we set ourselves apart from this world
 - 4) If we do this, if we set Him apart, then we are always to be prepared to give an answer for our hope
 - 5) So, do we have hope?
 - 6) Do we walk in assurance that our hope in what we cannot see is based on absolute truth?
 - 7) Do we have a hope based upon what we know to be true, not on what we hope is true?
 - 8) **SLIDE** Setting Christ apart is the beginning of life
 - 9) If we set Christ apart as our Lord and Savior, then we are setting apart His Truth from all other "truths"
 - 10) Therefore, we should not hesitate to speak up and give THE reason, not reasons, THE reason: Jesus Christ
 - 11) We do so with gentleness and respect, which is only possible through the Holy Spirit

C) **SLIDE** ¹⁸ For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹ through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison ²⁰ who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, ²¹ and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

- 1) This is the gospel - the good news
- 2) Jesus died once, for everyone, for the forgiveness of all sins
- 3) Do we believe that, or do we hope that?
- 4) Do we believe that, or do we believe a version of that?
- 5) If I believe that, then I believe it for me and for everyone else
- 6) My granddaughter asked last night when Jesus had to die.
- 7) When we answer that question, are we telling a story, or are we recounting the truth?
- 8) Do we truly believe Jesus sits at God's right hand?
- 9) Do we truly believe all authorities and powers are under Him?
- 10) Do we believe baptism is a nice thing to do, or do we believe baptism is what we should want to do?
- 11) We are baptized because it tells everyone that we do not hope Jesus was resurrected, but that we know He was resurrected
- 12) Baptism is a part of our testimony that we do not hope all of this is true
- 13) Baptism is an act that declares to everyone that we know all of this is true
- 14) Do we believe that we have been chosen? That our voices are to be heard? That we are the light and the salt of the earth? Do we believe Peter is speaking to us?

D) Is Heaven for Real?