

## I. Introduction

- A. I want to talk about our eternal comfort today, which is heaven.
  - 1. **An Eternity of Comfort**
- B. Today is the Sunday before Easter. In the church calendar, it is called Palm Sunday. This is the day Jesus returned to Jerusalem as a different kind of king, humble and riding on a colt.
- C. There is another day on the church calendar, but nobody knows the date. That will be the day Jesus returns to earth as the King of kings and Lord of Lords, glorious and riding on a white horse of vengeance and truth.
- D. Palm Sunday will be fulfilled in Advent Day, that Great Day. In that Day this whole cosmos will be rolled up like a scroll, the elements will be dissolved, and the new heavens and earth will be born.
- E. The story of this worn out world is going somewhere, and if you are a child of God, that somewhere is heaven.
- F. If you have put your faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, within sixty seconds of your death, you will more alive than you have ever been before.
  - 1. *"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ," (Philippians 3:20)*
- G. This verse tells us where our citizenship is, and where our Savior is. Heaven and heaven.
- H. The whole story of history is a story of God creating beings in his own image for fellowship with him. We humans are that race, and our fellowship with God is meant to be eternal.
- I. Peel back all the layers of creation and existence, and you'll find a God of love at the core. A loving, relational Trinity at the core. In his eternal counsels, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, have decreed that we should enjoy his company forever.
- J. So David could say...
  - 1. *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever." (Psalms 23:6)*
- K. God is restoring to us the Paradise that we lost in the garden of Eden. But not only restoring Paradise, he is radically, immeasurably upgrading it, beyond your wildest imagination.
- L. Heaven is the native land for a child of God. You were made for heaven, body, soul, and spirit, mind, will, emotions.
  - 1. Before I get to deep into it, I need to say that
    - a) **Heaven is not a reward for those who behave. Heaven is a gift for those who believe.**
  - 2. So be saved.
- M. This Fallen World is a morally broken Pain Machine. Sin and evil are alien invaders. The whole cosmos was distorted, and fell under a curse.
- N. Things are not as they were meant to be.
- O. They never will be on this side of heaven.
- P. But, that there is a heaven now, and that every believer in Jesus will one day meet there... to call that good news is the greatest understatement in history.
  - 1. There will be no hospitals in heaven, for there will be no sickness. There will be no jails in heaven, for there will be no crime. There will be no cemeteries in heaven, for there will be no death. There will be no evil in heaven, for there will be no devil. There will be no therapy in heaven, for there will be no tears. There will be no pain in heaven, for we will have glorified bodies. There will be no sorrows in heaven, for we will have glorified souls. There will be no banks in heaven, for we will walk on streets of gold. There will be no mortgages heaven, for we'll be in our Father's house. There will be no stress in heaven, for conflict has been wiped away. There will be no loneliness of heaven, for we will know and be known. There will be no boredom in heaven, for new mercies await every day. There will be no regrets in heaven, for former things are passed away. There will be no fear in heaven, for we'll be face to face with Jesus. And there will be no Giant Pain Machine in heaven, for God's Giant Grace machine will have triumphed in the end.
    - a) The fall will be reversed. Evil will be parked in a far off parking space. Satan's head will be crushed. The cosmos will be reborn. Paradise Lost will be Regained and Upgraded. King Jesus will be crowned Lord of All. Every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess. And we will enter into the unending joy of the Lord.
- Q. This is the destiny of every child of God.
- R. Life on earth is just a stay at a hotel on the long journey home.
- S. And what an incredible home it will be.
- T. I'd like to give you my top seven truths about heaven and I hope they comfort your soul.

## II. Top Seven Truths about Heaven

## A. What is heaven?

**Heaven in the place where God makes his presence specially known and where Jesus now resides in his glorified body.**

- 1. For a long time I struggled to understand heaven. Because I was taught that heaven is where God is, or heaven is where God lives.
- 2. I was also taught that God is everywhere. He is omnipresent, which means all of God fills all of space all the time.
- 3. Can you see my problem?
  - a) If heaven is where God is, and if God is everywhere, then why isn't everywhere heaven?
- 4. But then theology came to my rescue.
- 5. Yes, God is everywhere, but there's something special about heaven. It is the place where God makes his presence specially known. There is something extra, something different, something beyond about the presence of God in heaven that is not the case everywhere else.
- 6. Yes, God is omnipresent, but he can still localize himself in meaningful ways.
- 7. But even beyond that, think about Jesus. Where is did he go?

8. Well, again, in one sense, Jesus is with me. He's in my heart. He's in your heart... he's with every believer everywhere all at once.
9. But that is spiritual presence. What about his physical presence?
  - a) *"This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11)*
10. When he ascended, he went to heaven. That is what Scripture says. When he comes back, he will come back from heaven.
11. Heaven is Christ's home, and it's my home too, and one day, in God's good time, I'll get there. You too, right?

**B. Will we still be ourselves in heaven?**

**Yes. We will be our truest, most authentic selves with all the bad stuff erased, and all the beauty and capacity brought to completion.**

1. Going to heaven does not erase you. You are still you and I am still myself.
2. When Jesus was transfigured, he was met by Moses and Elijah. Both of them had died a thousand years before Christ, and were in heaven. But Moses was Moses and Elijah was Elijah and Jesus knew who they were.
3. In heaven, people like Abraham and Isaac and David and Ruth and Esther and Mary and Joseph will all be there. You can talk to them.
4. Your family members who know the Lord will be there. Your friends who know the Lord will be there.
5. Your personality, your interests, your passions, your sense of humor, and your sanctified memories will all go with you. Physically, you'll be recognizable.
6. Whatever age is the best age for you is the age you will be. I don't know, pick a number... 26 forever.
7. You will have emotions. You will have desires.
8. When God said he will take you to heaven, he meant YOU, by name.
9. Only two things are different:
  - a) The bad stuff is all taken away.
  - b) The good stuff is all completed, magnified, and glorified.
10. How different this is from the secular idea of our destiny. They say death is the end. They say at death you are snuffed out like a candle. They say that the only place you live will be in the memories of other people—but that can't possibly do you any good, because you're gone. There is no hope and no comfort and no reunion someday.
11. This is also radically different from the new age, spiritualistic, monist, and buddhist versions of the afterlife. For them, when you did, you will be absorbed into the All... you will be one with everyone and everything, and personal identities will all go away.
12. This is also a far cry from the cycles of reincarnation taught by Hinduism and others. You will stop being you, but you will start being someone else or something else.
13. Here is God's promise to you:
  - a) *"For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain." (Isaiah 66:22)*
14. Not only that, but God says YOU are registered in heaven (Hebrews 12:23), and YOUR NAME written in his book (Revelation 3:5).

**C. Who is in heaven right now?**

**Every believer of all the ages past, including the people we love who died in the Lord, are already in heaven, in the presence of God.**

1. There is no waiting room. There is no delay. When a believer dies, their body goes to the grave, but their soul and spirit go immediately to the Lord.
2. You are the union of a material and immaterial essence. In death, your material essence—your body—goes back to dust. Your immaterial essence—your soul and spirit, your personality, your mind, will and emotions—goes straight to heaven to be with the Lord forever.
3. That's what death is. Death is the departure of your soul and spirit from your body.
  - a) *"We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:8)*
  - b) *"Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory." (Psalms 73:23-24)*
4. My father has been received into glory. He is there. My uncles and aunts. My grandparents are there. My friends who died too young are there. And so it goes.
5. Who will you see there?
6. Heaven will be a reunion unlike any other.

**D. What will heaven be like?**

**Heaven will be an extravagant place with ever-new wonders to delight, amaze, and take your breath away.**

1. The Bible runs out of language when describing heaven. So it uses what is called "language of accommodation." Language of accommodation is what happens with you have to dumb something down for someone to understand it.
2. When it comes to heaven, we're all dumb, and our fallen human minds are too small, to even scratch the surface of the magnificence we will encounter there.
  - a) **MAGNIFICENCE** - *"having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." (Revelation 21:11)*

- b) **OPULENCE** - *"The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald," (Revelation 21:18-19)*
  - c) **WEALTH** - *"The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass." (Revelation 21:21)*
    - (1) In the ancient world, the pearl was the costliest of precious stones.
  - d) **BRIGHTNESS** - *"The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light." (Revelation 21:23)*
  - e) **ANGELS** - *"Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," (Revelation 5:11)*
  - f) **IMMENSITY** - *"The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel." (Revelation 21:16-17)*
    - (1) I started to look up how big this is, until I found a very old Bible scholar who said the numbers were there not to give us an exact dimension, but to make us stand in awe.
    - (2) I'm good with that.
  - g) **POPULATION** - *"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands," (Revelation 7:9)*
  - h) **PURITY** - *"But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." (Revelation 21:27)*
3. Every Sunday, as a little boy, my family went to my grandparents home for Sunday dinner. You might guess my grandparents are Italian.
    - a) In a sense, the meal started when we walked in the door. It was the smell. The aromas coming out of that kitchen—I can still remember. And my grandparents had 3 restaurants. They knew how to cook.
    - b) Just the smell made me happy. Just the smell told me I was in the right place, and that good things were about to happen.
    - c) I just had to keep going through the living room to the kitchen. And wow.
  4. God describes the magnificence of heaven in vivid detail. He does so for a reason.
    - a) He wants to smell of heaven to tell you... every single day...
      - (1) My son, my daughter... you're in the right place. Just keep going, because good things are about to happen.
- E. Is heaven actually a place? Will there still be space and time?**  
**Scripture reveals heaven as a place, and space and time there will be tailored to what we can understand and experience in glory.**
1. There is some teaching in Christianity which says that heaven is not a place, it's a state of existence, a state of being.
  2. I don't believe that. The Bible doesn't teach that.
  3. If you follow that line of thought, you end up morphing heaven into a virtual projection through oculus prime.
  4. Heaven is a place.
    - a) *"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14:2)*
  5. Place translates the greek word *topos*. It means "a place. Any portion of space marked off from its surroundings."
  6. The Bible is clear that every aspect of the eternal state, every aspect of the heavenly realm will be vastly greater than the old, but continuous with it.
  7. You will have a resurrection body, and whatever else that means, it means you will take up space in some way, in some transcendent form of tangible physicality.
  8. God works by resurrection — which means the same person who died comes back to life again. But it's the same person.
  9. I believe the space-time continuum as we know it will be destroyed and resurrected in a new creation.
  10. The New Heavens and the New Earth will be a resurrection of the old heavens and earth.
    - a) Vastly superior. In some ways the same.
    - b) Purified, augmented, and all the glory and beauty added.
  11. And the main thing is that the curse — that horrible consequence of sin — that curse will be lifted. It will be a thing of the past. And the new heavens and new earth — a universe far beyond the one we know today — will be our celestial playground for all the ages long.
    - a) *"because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Romans 8:21)*
  12. The dominion of the rule and reign of God will be expanded by us. We will visit the planets and galaxies. We will plant the flag of King Jesus on every one. And we will occupy them all for the glory of God. Space will exist.
  13. And time will exist too.
    - a) We will serve God "day and night" in heaven (Revelation 7:15).
    - b) Summer and winter, day and night will never cease (Genesis 8:22).
  14. Look at it this way. We will live with time, but not under time, forever.
    - a) There will be no deadlines.
      - (1) We will not grow old. We will not grow tired. We will not grow feeble. We will not grow sore.
    - b) When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's praise, Than when we'd first begun.

**F. What's the main thing in heaven?**

**The main thing in heaven will be the glory and honor directed toward the Lord Jesus Christ.**

1. Heaven has one celebrity. Yeah, it will be awesome to talk to Jonah and Paul and Daniel and Ruth and Moses and Elijah...
2. But heaven has only one celebrity and it's Jesus. In fact, his coronation day kicks off the fulness of the party that is heaven.
  - a) *"And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.'" (Revelation 5:9-10)*
3. The Son of God promised the Father and the Spirit that he would effect mankind's salvation. In return, the Father and the Spirit promised to blessing him and to give him a tribe and a family as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sands of the sea.
4. God promised to honor him, magnify him, and glorify him. God promised at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.
  - a) **Heaven is the ultimate fulfillment of all the promises God made to Jesus Christ.**
    - (1) He will have glory. He will receive his tribe. He will step into his inheritance.
5. God promises to bless Jesus. God promises to exalt Jesus. To bring glory to him; honor, power, dominion. All creation for all eternity be found giving glory to Jesus.
6. Now, that is going to happen. It's already started. You might have heard me say before...
  - a) Ladies and gentlemen... you are going to bow the knee to Jesus and confess he is Lord.
  - b) Tech Giants and Moguls... you are going to bow the knee to Jesus and confess he is Lord.
  - c) Atheists, Agnostics, and Apatheists... you are going to bow the knee to Jesus and confess he is Lord.
  - d) Every student, every man, every woman, every sinner, every saint, every angel, every demon, even Satan himself... you are going to bow the knee to King Jesus and confess he is Lord because that day is a promise from God to God and it cannot be broken.
7. God is going to light up Jesus. God is going to glorify him. Like a Christmas tree, God will light him up, and he will dazzle the angel and we will all fall to our knees in wonder, appreciation, and praise.
8. Jesus is the glory. The demons will gnash their teeth, and the devil will weep in anger. The unbelievers of all the ages will be cast to their eternal doom. And then something amazing will happen.

**G. What is the main thing in heaven for us?**

**Every believer in Jesus will step into the same glory and joy that God pours out on Christ.**

1. The most amazing promise in the Bible, when you think about it, is this:
  - a) *"When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory." (Colossians 3:4)*
  - b) *"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John 3:2)*
2. When God lights up Jesus like a Christmas tree, he lights up you too.
3. The same heavenly applause that honors Jesus will honor you.
4. Your life in this world may be obscure. Nobody knows your name. You've never made a difference. You live in the shadows. Nobody is impressed with you. There's nothing special. Heaven will turn all of that around.
  - a) Your true glory will be revealed. The angels will gasp in awe of you. The demons will tremble before you. The vaults of heaven will open up to you. The glory of God will radiate from you. Everything that is true of Jesus Christ in his human nature before the Father will, in that moment, be fully and manifestly true of you. You will be like him.
    - (1) And that is the greatest grace, and therefore, the greatest glory God ever bestowed.
5. In Hebrews 6:19, the Bible says that the doctrine of heaven is an anchor for your soul.
6. In Colossians 3:2, God says to set your mind on things above, not on things of earth.
  - a) If you want sanity in this fallen world, let your mind dwell on heaven. If you want comfort. If you want stability. If you want hope. Heaven is always here, described for you.

**III. Conclusion**

- A. This whole life is a prelude to heaven. Sixty seconds after you die, you will be face to face with your Savior. And everything that's ever happened in your life will be given some kind of meaning, some kind of value, and some kind of sense.
- B. And when you finally see your life from heaven's vantage point, you will confess that God has been better to you than you ever deserved.
  1. Jesus wept at the tomb of his friend, Lazarus. He comforted the man's grieving sisters with such kindness and grace. He said, "Whoever believes in me shall never die" (John 11:26). And he raised Lazarus from the dead.
  2. Jesus found ten lepers. Instead of turning from them, he went to them. And he healed them all. He said, "
- C. **Heaven means that all your problems have an expiration date.**
  1. Your arguments will cease. Your conflicts will end. Your stresses will all go away. Your clouds of depression will evaporate. Your sickness will be a thing of the past. Your disabilities will be reversed. Your debts will be paid.
  2. Gather together all your heartaches, regrets, secrets, hostilities, dysfunctions, addictions, habits, fears, griefs, losses, laments, disappointments, self-loathings, self-rejections, self-condemnations,... all your bitterness, hatred, feuds, tears, labors, failures, deficiencies, and sins of omission, commission, and temptations.
  3. Write over them gone, gone, gone, gone, and gone.
- D. Jesus said it is finished making heaven the destiny of every child of God, so that you live forever, but your problems do not.
- E. That's heaven. I hope to see you there.