

Sermon 6/13 and 17, 2018 A Little Heaven in Our Hearts II Corinthians 5:1-10

Dear Heaven-Bound Believers:

What is home to you?

Is it the place where you were...

- born
- raised
- started a family
- the happiest
- or are retired

Home is where the heart is

There is an old saying that “Home is where the heart is.”

Whatever we consider “home” to be we appreciate it because home is a place where...

- the world of strife is shut out
- the world of love is shut in
- we grumble the most and are treated the best
- we rest
- we can make mistakes and still be loved

However, we know that as long as our home is on earth, it will not be perfect.

Therefore, as believers we look forward to another home – the home built by God.

Where is this home?

What is this home?

How do I get into this home?

For believers in Jesus, this home is heaven and the place it can be found begins in the heart. In Christ, we have A LITTLE HEAVEN IN OUR HEARTS which is our true home.

Heaven in our hearts

John 14:23 “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

Home for us is where the Lord is.

Home for us is the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts.

Home for us is our hearts desire to dwell with the Lord.

Home for us is the home built by God for us in heaven

This home built by God for us – Heaven – is described in the Bible as a place of:

- incomparable beauty
- perfect rest
- indescribable bliss
- absence of all suffering
- everlasting bliss

As believers Heaven is our home and that home is built by God beginning in our hearts and ending up in the new heaven and the new earth where we will dwell forever in peace and joy.

Our Heavenly Home is Eternal vv1-5

Our present home is temporary vv1-4

1. It is an earthly tent - earthly house = tent house

- life on earth is like an unsettled tent life
- “For here we do not have an enduring city but we are looking for the city that is to come.” Hebrews 13:14
- life on earth is fragile ie camping is not permanent
 - ever spend a night in a tent during a storm
 - open to destruction – susceptible to diseases

“destroyed” refers to untying the ropes of tent pegs to bring the canvass down.

- life on earth is temporary
 - our bodies return to the dust Ecclesiastes 12:7
 - Do you know what the “dust” in your home consists of? Dead skin

2. It is a painful life vv2 and 4

Paul wrote this because he was constantly on the edge of death.

- We see mortality all around us
- Nursing homes, hospitals
- We see people who long to be clothed with their heavenly home
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Why do we groan? II Corinthians 4:8-9, 17

We don't groan so much so as to escape from the pains of this life, but we groan because we have a desire to be in heaven.

To be clothed with our heavenly dwelling

Our desire and our goal = “to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling”

- Yes, we feel the burdens and stress of this life
- But, we groan to “put on” ie “to be clothed” with our heavenly dwelling

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Not so much a longing to “escape” but a longing to “attain”

- We are not maneuvering for a departure from this life
- Our focus is setting our eyes on our heavenly home II Corinthians 4:8
- This sustains us under our present afflictions

Life

I Corinthians 15:54 “Life” = spiritual, divine, heavenly, eternal existence in heavenly glory
* This life does not end

The life of immortality swallows up this mortal life.

- heavenly life will swallow up our earthly existence
- we are living now forever – right now II Corinthians 4:11

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Our future home is timeless vv1, 3, 5

1. Because it is permanent

- building from God – our heavenly home has its source and origin in God – from God
- it can never be taken down like a tent or a shabbily built house

Back in August of 1992 I traveled down to South Florida a few days after Hurricane Andrew. The church I was a part of back then was in North Florida and we gathered up supplies for the people devastated by the storm.

- I was awestruck by the destruction of the homes and the buildings around Homestead, Fla.
- I found out, however, that many of the homes were destroyed in part because they were built on the cheap.
- The following year the church I was at decided to build a parsonage and the Synod told the church to reinforce the structure with materials that would withstand a hurricane.

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Our home built by God is permanent and glorious. Paul says: “Amid all our sufferings in this ‘tent-life’ we have and possess the eternal heavenly existence and life.”

- it begins in our hearts through faith in Jesus

John 14:2 “In my Father’s house are many rooms. I am going there to prepare a place for you.”

2. Because it is promised to us

- * we hold a clear title v5
- * we are heirs II Corinthians 4:17 c3 “clothed”

* we will not be found naked – we will be fully and permanently dressed with our heavenly home

Our heavenly home will have....

- no tears, death, sorrow, crying or pain
- we will not be destitute or homeless
- we see this home now with the eyes of faith II Corinthians 4:18

This home is guaranteed to us – We have the Spirit as a DEPOSIT

Ephesians 1:14 “The Holy Spirit who is a deposit who guarantees our inheritance. Our reservations have been made.

- the down payment has been made
- God paid it for us
- And we won’t be let down by what we see once in heaven
- Ever have this happen to you after making a motel reservation?

This is why we long for it...We were made for it. V5a

- Hebrews 11:10 Abraham looked forward to the city built by God
- Ephesians 1:4 God chose us before the world was created for this home

Our Heavenly Home is what we live for vv6-10

Cheerfully confident of heaven v6

Our present home keeps us from our permanent home vv6-8

* But through faith we are cheerfully confident of heaven v6

- Faith is being sure and certain of what we do not see Hebrews 11

- we are joined to the Lord by faith via the Word and Sacraments

• Through faith we are “cheerfully confident” of our present home in the body v7

- our earthly mode is not to be despised – Culture of life not death

- our time in the body here is not to be wasted Eph 5:10 “Find out what pleases the Lord...” Rom 14:8, 12 “We belong to the Lord...”

- we have a purpose NOW

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- “Some people are so heavenly minded they are of no earthly good.” ---- “The more heavenly minded you are the more earthly good you will be.”

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The proper focus on God will give you the proper focus on people.

• Our future home motivates us to please God

- our future home is certain in Christ so our goal on earth...

- to please Him v9 “aim, ambition”

- **“Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” I Cor**

- “Christ will be exalted in my body” Phil 1:20
- Our future judgment is certain in Christ v10
- universal judgment - “we all”
- unilateral judgment - judgment is based ONLY on Christ’s work
- Remember the context and the Greek language of this verse
- Romans 11:6 “And if by grace, then it is not longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.”

So, what is Paul talking about here in verse 10?

- the attitude of a person
- the motivation of a person
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- Is someone motivated by faith in Christ or by work-righteousness?
- V10 “things done” in the Greek language of the New Testament does not refer to the individual good or bad deeds done but it refers to the spirit or attitude behind those deeds.
- “good or bad” refers to the sum of each person’s life – What someone’s life looks like in God’s eyes - Are things done on the basis of faith or unbelief? Hebrews 11:6

Works are the public evidence of our faith. James 2:17

Verse 10 is a description of the Last Judgment on the Last Day.

- All will stand before Christ
- Everyone’s actions will be seen for what they are or were
- “These things” done by means of the body constitute the sum of each person’s life
- How does your life measure up in God’s sight?

What was present in a person’s life?

- faith or unbelief
- Christ righteousness or one’s own lack of righteousness

Romans 14:12 We will all stand before God’s judgment seat.

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.”

Did we live in faith or out of faith?

Did we trust in Christ righteousness or our own righteousness which does not save?

It is better higher up!

D.L Moody used to tell a story about an optimistic and cheerful lady who was a shut-in...bedridden in an apartment in a run-down building. She would lie alone everyday in a shabby room of this run-down apartment on the 5th floor.

One day one of her friends came to see her with another friend. The second friend was wealthy. As they entered the building, the wealthy lady was struck by the depressing building. As they walked up the stairs to the apartment the wealthy lady commented: "Such a dark and filthy place." Her friend responded: "It is better higher up!"

They climbed the stairs to the 3rd floor. "It's even worse here" the wealthy lady said. Her friend responded: "It's better higher up." Finally they arrived to the 5th floor and entered the apartment to see the bed-ridden woman.

The lady was glowing to see her friends and she was radiating with the love of Christ in her heart. The wealthy lady could not ignore the awful surroundings and she said to the bed-ridden woman: "It must be difficult for you living here like this."

The bed-ridden woman responded with a smile: "Yes, but it is better higher up."