

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE?

April 2022

Day 1-

READ: [John 14:1-7](#)

REFLECT: At the last supper, Jesus predicted Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial and then John records Him saying, "do not let your hearts be troubled." As He is preparing His disciples for what will come on the cross, He is also giving them hope and reassurance as He talks to them about the end of their own lives. And as He talks about heaven, Jesus describes it as a home. Think of some characteristics of your home on earth that make it appealing to you and then try to imagine what a home in heaven might be like! It will be beyond any of our imaginings, yet we can know for certain it will be a forever home of peace in the presence of Jesus Christ.

Ask Yourself:

- Why do you think it was so important for him to let them know that He was preparing a place for them in heaven and that they would be with Him forever?

-Why is it important for you to know this?

Pause to Pray: Jesus, thank you for preparing a place for me, and for all your people. As I read what your word says about heaven over the next several days, fill my heart with hope and anticipation rather than fear or dread...

Take a Next Step:

Want to follow this plan on the YouVersion Bible app? Search "whoisgrace" on the app or find it online [here](#).

Day 2-

READ: [John 3:16-18](#); [John 5:24](#); [John 6:40](#); [John 10:27-28](#); [1 John 5:11-13](#)

REFLECT: When you die you will either immediately be *with* God in heaven or be *apart* from Him in hell. That means we must somehow in the time that we're alive secure our eternity in heaven. How do we do that? And is it really possible to be sure we're going to heaven? Jesus died so that we could be sure of salvation, sure of eternity. And how we do that begins with His invitation to share a relationship with Him. Let's see what Jesus has to say about it...

"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life." -John 5:24

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand." -John 10:27-28

"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to

you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

-1 John 5:11-13

Ask Yourself:

-Have I received Jesus' invitation to have a forever relationship with Him? If not, what is holding me back?

Pause to Pray: Wow, Jesus! I am so amazed that you invite me into relationship with you. Thank you dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins. I don't want to live my life without you for one more day. I want to be counted as your follower for all the days I live on this earth. And one day, I can't wait to be with You for eternity! Thank you, Jesus...

Take a Next Step:

If you're ready to say yes to Jesus, please share that with someone you love and trust who loves and trusts Jesus! Welcome to the family of God, brother or sister!

Day 3-

READ: [Philippians 1:21-23](#)

REFLECT: The evangelist Billy Graham (1918-2018) said, "Some day you will read or hear that Billy Graham is dead. Don't you believe a word of it. I shall be more alive than I am now. I will just have changed my address. I will have gone into the presence of God."

Ask Yourself:

-Consider Paul's words, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" alongside Billy's, "I shall be more alive than I am now." How would you describe being "alive" now? Why do you think both Paul and Billy anticipated more "life" after death?

Pause to Pray: Lord, teach my heart to long for eternity...

Take a Next Step: Choose 1!

An old song says, "This world is not my home. I'm just passing through." Take some time in quiet worship to just enjoy Jesus and remind yourself He is your true home.

Prayerfully take a few minutes to think about what you would like to have included in your obituary. How could you use that permanent record to reflect your faith in Jesus and lead others to Him? Thank Jesus for giving you the opportunity to live for Him on earth today and for as many tomorrows as He gives you.

Day 4-

READ: [1 Peter 1:3-4](#); [Romans 8:18](#); [Romans 12:2](#); [Philippians 3:7-8](#)

REFLECT: Paul and Peter both seem to have lived differently, risked differently, and hoped differently than the rest of the world. Their understanding of the brevity of life on earth versus the eternal promise of heaven must have completely transformed how they viewed their day-to-day lives! The truth of Jesus as our Savior transforms our hearts, transforms our minds, and has the power to transform our very hold on our lives.

Ask Yourself:

-How do Paul and Peter encourage you to loosen your grip on this life?

Pause to Pray: Jesus, when today gets crazy, help me to remember that my hope in you reaches far beyond these moments and into eternity...

Day 5-

READ: [Genesis 2:7-9](#); [Revelation 21:1-5](#)

REFLECT: The story of Scripture begins and ends with gardens and shalom (peace and wholeness with God, with each other, and with creation). God created the earth and had a perfect relationship with Adam and Eve before they sinned. And then, in Revelation, we see that there will be a new heaven and a new earth with perfect relationships and peace restored.

The question for us then is how we will live in this time between. Let's consider the words of Jesus from Matthew's gospel:

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden." (Matthew 5:14)

"'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40)

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

Ask Yourself:

-What does life look like for you in this time between the gardens? When you look around at friends, family, coworkers, classmates, etc.- what does life look like for them?

-How can you cultivate more hope, more gratitude, more peace, and more love as you wait? And how can you share that with others?

Pause to Pray: Jesus, you are my hope. You are the hope of the world. Help me share that hope, share your light and truth with the people in my circles...

Take a Next Step:

When someone complains today, how could you bring hope, life, truth, peace to the conversation?

Day 6- MYTH #1: HEAVEN WILL BE BORING

READ: [Ephesians 2:6-7](#); [John 14:2](#); [Revelation 19:9](#)

REFLECT: Heaven is a wonderful place! Do you believe that? Unfortunately, there are some misconceptions, some prevalent myths that get tossed around about heaven. Over the next few days, let's take a look at what the scriptures say about these myths, starting with the myth, "heaven will be boring."

So, how do we know heaven will NOT be boring? Well, for starters, just take a look out the window! Marvel in the beauty and complexity and creativity of the world around you. How can heaven be boring if the most creative brilliant mind in the universe created this amazing earth with every unique animal and tree and flower and every mountain, and the rainbows and the white sand beaches, and the stars and planets in all the universe?! How could we think that His crowning achievement will be boring? Heaven will be exhilarating and thrilling. Everything good in this life will be perfect in heaven. It is going to blow our minds.

Ask Yourself:

-What are the beautiful things you love most in creation?

-What are the sights, sounds, tastes, smells, feelings that you love here on this earth? Close your eyes and imagine them being perfected!

Pause to Pray: Jesus, my heart is getting excited about eternity with you! Thank you for giving me glimpses of your wonder and beauty here in this world, in this life...

Take a Next Step:

Take a walk. Play with some kids. Watch a nature show about another place in the world. Choose something that lets your heart and mind delight in the wonder and beauty of God!

Day 7- MYTH #2- We will become angels in the clouds.

READ: [John 4:23](#); [Matthew 11:29-30](#); [Revelation 22:1-21](#)

REFLECT: Have you ever heard (or said) that when someone dies, "heaven gained another angel!?" It is a lovely sentiment- imagining your loved one looking down from heaven, floating on a cloud, with puffy wings. But the Bible is clear that there is a distinction between people and angels both now and in the future. People will remain people in heaven. And angels will remain angels. And the Bible doesn't say that heaven will be in the clouds. Rather, it tells us that there will be a "new heaven and a new earth." Remember what we learned yesterday? It's going to be a wonderful place!

And one more thing about the angel stuff, we probably get the idea of playing harps on a cloud with cherubs from Renaissance art. But the reality is that worshiping God for eternity will be far more than just singing. When God created Adam and Eve – they worshiped God in the Garden. But what did that look like? They weren't raising their hands all day singing songs; no, they worshipped by tending to their place. Taking care of the garden. Naming the animals. Having dominion and authority over the earth.

We will worship God in heaven by working productively and of course we will sing because we are a singing people – but we will do so many other things. Heaven is going to be a place of productivity and accomplishment. Revelation 22:3, 5 says that in the New Earth, “*His servants will worship Him...they will reign with Him.*” In heaven we will work, but it will be work that is restful, work without the curse. Totally fulfilling and purposeful. That sounds far better than a cloud and harp!

Ask Yourself:

-How is the reality of heaven better than the myth of becoming an angel?

-Why do we hold onto myths like this?

Pause to Pray: “Come, Lord Jesus!” (*marana tha* in Aramaic). Use that cry to lead you into prayer today.

Day 8- MYTH #3- We will lose our identities

READ: [2 Corinthians 4:16-5:15](#)

REFLECT: Some people believe that we will turn into nameless faceless spirits that just get absorbed into God – but that is eastern religion. This comes from a worldview that says that what’s wrong with the world is everything physical, that our physical bodies are where evil lies – where our passions reside –and true enlightenment will come when we finally throw off these physical shackles and merge our consciousness with the great spirit in the sky. That is not Christianity.

One of the by-products of the resurrection, the core doctrine of the Christian faith, is that in addition to being saved by Jesus’ victory over death, we will have our bodies resurrected after death like Jesus did. And we will retain our identities and be forever restored. 1 Corinthians 15:53 says, “*this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.*” And on the day that we receive our resurrected bodies – we’ll be most fully ourselves, in body and in spirit.

Ask Yourself:

-What makes you unique? Think about someone you love- what makes them unique?

-How does it change your view of heaven to imagine that you and every Christ follower will be most fully and perfectly themselves?

Pause to Pray: God, thank you that even in my own self there are glimpses of eternity, glimpses of your glory...

Take a Next Step:

Encourage someone by sharing the unique attributes that you admire about them. Take it a step further and share the exciting news that those good things God has made in them will be perfected one day in heaven! (And if they don’t yet have a relationship with Jesus, invite them to have a conversation with you about that!)

Day 9- MYTH #4- All people (and dogs) go to heaven

READ: [Matthew 25:31-46](#); [Romans 6:23](#)

REFLECT: Will all the people you love be in heaven? Will all the animals you love be in heaven? Let's start with the second question. In the first garden, Eden, God created animals and called them good. So it would make sense that when He restores us to the garden, animals will be there. The Bible never mentions, though, that animals have souls. So, will our pets be there? Perhaps that's one of the questions we let God be sovereign over, and we let go of trying to figure it out.

And what about people? It is clear that all people will die and that all people will have eternity. But it is also clear that not everyone spends eternity in heaven with Jesus. That's bad news. So, is there any good news? Yes! Absolutely! THE Good News is that heaven and eternal life have been made available to everyone through the death and resurrection of Jesus. The only way to receive the gift eternal life is to make the appropriate decisions about Jesus Christ during this lifetime. You cannot earn your way there by good works – your good works will never be good enough. The only answer is to put all faith, trust and confidence in the work of Jesus on the cross.

Ask Yourself:

-List 3 people in your life who have not accepted the invitation to follow Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Pause to Pray: Pray for your list of 3 names. "Jesus, open their hearts to receive You..."

Take a Next Step:

Make a commitment to pray for your 3 names for 3 minutes at 3pm for the rest of the week. And ask God to give you an opportunity to share the hope of eternity with them!

Day 10- BE READY

READ: [Revelation 20:11-15](#); [Revelation 21:3-4](#)

REFLECT: Sometimes the writers of the Bible would run out of words to describe what will be in heaven, and they would move to words about what won't be in heaven. The apostle John was given a glimpse of heaven when he wrote: ...

God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. -Revelation 21:3-4.

Look at the key things that won't be there, mourning, crying, pain. Heaven will be entirely different than this world in this way. It is a place of pure joy and delight. Maybe you have experienced heartache and stress, or depression and disease this year. There will be none of it in heaven. Maybe you live with physical pain in your body every day. Heaven will be pain-free, Advil-free, arthritis-free, Covid free. People we love who are in wheelchairs are going to be able to run and walk and skip. The ones we love with special needs will be healthy and whole and have able bodies and able minds. Maybe you live with emotional scars and nightmares and memories and flashbacks and heartbreaks and disappointments

from your past that are simply overwhelming to you. You'll have none of that. All the broken and the hard will be gone!

There will be no anxious waiting rooms, no empty tissue boxes, no tear-stained divorce papers, no motionless ultrasounds, no tiny caskets, no bloated starving stomachs on TV. And did you notice who that passage just said is going to wipe away your tears when you get to heaven? It says, "*God himself will wipe the tears from their eyes.*" God himself. The same hands that carved the mountains. The hands that healed blind eyes and made sick people well. The same hands that were nail-pierced for our salvation will wipe the tears from your cheeks. It's an amazing picture of the tenderness of God. Heaven won't just be amazing for the scenery & adventure, but for personal healing and restoration.

The day is coming – one of these days will be your very last day on planet Earth. You don't get to predict it or control it. There is one of the little boxes on the calendar of your life that's the last one. You cannot escape death. And even though it is hard right now to see what life is like on the other side, there is something so much more extraordinary, so much better. And you don't have to fear it if you've been redeemed by Jesus Christ. Do you know why? Heaven is beyond your wildest imagination. It's indescribable. Heaven will blow your mind!

Ask Yourself:

-Are you ready?

Pause to Pray: Come, Lord Jesus, come!

Take a Next Step:

Keep praying for your 3 names for 3 minutes each day at 3pm!