

A Study of Heaven – Week 11

Tough Minded about Heaven

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. What reasons does Paul give us for studying about what happens when we are resurrected, either raptured or death? We should get:

1. Knowledge of what is going to happen.
2. Hope. v 13
3. Encouragement v 18
4. Comfort
5. Confidence to tell others

1 Peter 1:13 tells us to completely put our hope in the grace we will receive when Jesus returns. We received grace through faith in Jesus when we accepted Him. The grace is given when Christ returns is something more.

“Grace isn’t just for the past, when we first gave our lives to Jesus. It isn’t only for the present, where we live each moment standing in His grace (Romans 5:2). It is also for the future, when grace will be brought to us. God has only just *begun* to show us the riches of His grace.” (David Guzik)

As we study Satan over the next few months we will realize that Satan is constantly attacking us. Peter is telling us to:

1. prepare your minds for action to combat Satan
2. keep sober in spirit (be disciplined)
3. set your hope completely on the grace

I know that “I Then Shall Live” is one of Mike’s favorite hymns. Over the last few months, we have read verses in 2 Peter 3 that tell us

what will happen to the old earth. Because we know that the earth will be purified some day, how does Peter tell that we then shall we live?

(2 Peter 3:11-18)

1. V 11 - holy conduct and godliness
2. V12 – looking forward to Jesus’ return
3. V 12 – hastening His return
4. V 14 - be diligent to be found spotless and blameless by Him,
5. V14 - at peace
6. V 15 – patient
7. V17 - be on your guard

“We are puzzled at the longsuffering which causes so weary a delay. One of the reasons is that we have not much longsuffering ourselves. We think that we do well to be angry with the rebellious, and so we prove ourselves to be more like Jonah than Jesus. A few have learned to be patient and pitiful to the ungodly, but many more are of the mind of James and John, who would have called fire from heaven upon those who rejected the Savior. We are in such a hurry.”

(Spurgeon)

Peter wasn't the only one to teach about how we should live in light of the Second Coming of Christ. John and Paul also told how to live. In each of these verses what do they say about how we should live.

1. Colossians 3:4-5 – Get rid of our sin
2. 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 – increase and abound in love. Develop holy hearts.
3. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 – sanctified completely (set apart), live blamelessly (spirit, soul and body)
4. 1 John 2:28 – abide in Jesus, (Have a living connection with Christ, Dependence on Him and maintain them)

5. 1 John 3:2-3 – Do our best to be pure.

“If my wedding date is on the calendar, and I’m thinking of the person I’m going to marry, I shouldn’t be an easy target for seduction. Likewise, when I’ve meditated on Heaven, sin is terribly unappealing. It’s when my mind drifts from Heaven that sin seems attractive. Thinking of Heaven leads inevitably to pursuing holiness.” (Alcorn)

We are to study God’s Word. God has given us information about what heaven will be like, so God wants us to study heaven. 2 Peter 3:3-4 tells us that scoffers will come, isn’t that the way people are behaving or saying today. People consider the Bible a vending machine. “I like selection A7, Salvation but not selection B10, Obedience to God.”

What do these verses tell us how we should look to Christ’s 2nd Coming? We should -

1. Philippians 3:20 – Eagerly wait for His 2nd Coming
2. Titus 2:13 – Be looking forward to it.
3. 2 Timothy 4:8 – Love His 2nd Coming
4. 2 Peter 3:14 - Be looking forward to it.
5. Luke 21:28 – Lift up our heads to look for it.
6. 1 Corinthians 16:22 – “Maranatha!” Aramaic for “O Lord. Come!”

A key word in being prepared for Jesus’ 2nd Coming is ‘DILIGENCE’. (See 2nd Peter 1:5, 1:10 and 3:14) Peter uses it several times in 2 Peter. Salvation isn’t just “I accepted Christ into my heart.” It requires ‘walking the walk’. It is staying the course. It requires Diligence on our part. And No, you cannot lose your salvation but if

you are truly saved, you will work diligently to understand God's will in your life and be diligent at do what He has for you.

Knowing that Christ is coming again, how should we work to grow as Christians? (David Jeremiah chose words that start with "W".)

1. Growth comes through the **Will of God**. Philippians 3:12-14
2. Growth comes through the **Watchfulness of Prayer** 1 Peter 4:7
3. Growth comes through the **Word of God**. 1 Peter 2:2
Revelation 22:7
4. Growth comes through the **Work of the Church**. Hebrews 10:24-25

Wrap up

The message of Paul is this: we are to stand firm, grounded in the fact that we have the peace of God in our hearts. We know who we are in Christ Jesus. We don't have to prove ourselves to anybody—we know we are assured of Christ's forgiveness, we know we are loved by God, and we know that we have a secure home in heaven forever. (Charles Stanley)

One minute after an believer dies . . .

- Angels usher your soul to Heaven (Luke 16:22)
- You immediately enter God's presence (2 Corinthians 5:6-8)
- You are conscious, in command of your faculties for thinking, feeling, speech and memories (Luke 16:19-31)

- You participate in magnificent worship with angels and believers before the throne of God and Jesus (Revelation 4-5)
- You are aware of some degree of activities and events on Earth (Revelation 6:9-10)
- You will recognize and communicate with believers who preceded you to Heaven (Luke 9:28-36)

The current heaven is not our final destination. We will have resurrected bodies and live on the New Earth after Christ's 2nd Coming. The New Earth will be like the Garden of Eden.

It will be more amazing than we could ever imagine.

Revelation 4:11

“Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

Revelation 5:12

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power, wealth, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing.”

Psalm 136:26

“Give thanks to the God of heaven.
His love endures forever.”