

**Phil. 3:20-21**

**Nov. 3, 2019**

**Hebrews 11:13-16      Heaven: Our True Home  
   All Saints**

***But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. Philippians 3:20-21***

**Citizenship – we are here from numerous different countries. People tend to love their home country, to greater or lesser degree. But there's something greater and more wonderful than our home countries happening right here: we are in this place, together, from points around the globe because Christ is leading us to our true country, our home: our citizenship is in heaven.**

***... our citizenship is in heaven... Heaven ... To be honest, I can't say I've given much thought over the years to heaven, other than acknowledging heaven as my ultimate destination and true home. I've not given much thought to what heaven may be like or the details of how I get there other than holding fast to faith in Christ Jesus to bring me there. The metaphysics of what happens to me when I die are a mystery to me. I know that my mortal body will cease to function, will eventually decay ... but "me," the true person who has trusted his life to Christ, I believe, will some how continue. St. Paul wrote: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived" — the things God has prepared for those who love him" 1 Cor. 2:9.***

**Maybe I haven't given heaven and life after death much thought because I have just trusted that I will be in God's hands and whatever happens is what happens. I know where my future lies ... I've bet my life on it ... my future is with God, in His heaven, whatever form it may take. I believe that just to be in His presence is heaven.**

**Heaven is the place where the total presence of God is experienced. God is holy, and pure, and perfect, and sinless. Broken lives and unrepentant sinfulness cannot stand in such a Holy presence. All we have to do is look at ourselves, and look around us, and we realize that we are not perfect and holy and pure. If we are to be in Heaven we'll need help.**

**To be sure, there is one thing I can do in preparation and that is to surrender my life to Jesus, my Savior; to trust in him for my redemption from this broken, sinful life of mine, and trust that He will usher me into His holy presence. And as I follow Him, earnestly and honestly, my life becomes more conformed to His and thereby more fit for God's company. *For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known, 1 Corinthians 13:12.***

**The Christian faith is not only about getting people into Heaven, but also about getting Heaven into people. God's living presence is extended to us even**

now. We hope to get a taste of being in the presence of the Almighty when we worship Him in Spirit and in truth. One key to the gates of heaven is to bring yourself into God's presence here and now that you may become more comfortable in His presence in the life to come. Even when we enter into prayer we can practice turning off all the thoughts and problems and requests to God, that so easily flood our minds ... put them off just long enough, to enter into His healing presence. That is how we come to know that "Our hope in times of darkness is the presence of God, not the resolution of our circumstances." (Matt Chandler, The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, "The Valley" – on Right Now Media).

Today we remember those believers who have gone before us, trusting them into God's care, even as we long and hope for our own place in God's heaven. Referring to believers gone before us, the writer of Hebrews says, *All these people were still living by faith when they died.... they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them,* Heb.11:13-16. ...

Just as Jesus promised his followers: *My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am,* John 14:2-3.

The promise is that there is a place for us in heaven and Jesus is going ahead to prepare it. Have you ever made preparations for special guests coming to your home? House cleaning, food preparation, maybe even furniture moving gets done. Just so, Jesus makes preparations for his children to come to their eternal home. He makes a spiritual preparation. That's necessary because, the Bible tells us, when every one of us dies we must appear before God the righteous judge. God is infinite and holy. We are finite and sinful. We cannot stand before Almighty God in our own right, clothed in our unworthiness and sins.

Jesus has gone ahead of us to make things right with God. He made these preparations when he was on earth by dying on the cross for our sins and rising from the dead that we too may rise from death. Now Jesus stands in heaven next to God to testify on behalf of all who have placed their trust in him. He makes it possible for us to stand before God wearing the robe of righteousness given to us by Himself. When we die and appear before God, everything has been taken care of that we may be admitted to God's presence and accepted in love for Jesus' sake. Trust in God's promise ... trust your life to Jesus.

I heard that some children were asked what happens when a person dies. Here's what little Martha said: *"When you die, you don't have to do homework in heaven, unless your teacher is there, too."* In truth we do not know who all is going to be in heaven, except one.

Our Heavenly Father made another promise to us through Jesus. Listen to the promise, *"Where I am, there you may be also."* It is the promise that we will

**not be alone in heaven; that Jesus will be with us. This one is Jesus himself. Indeed, there will be others, but that is in God's hands. We can be sure that Jesus is there and that really is enough to make it heaven**

**No one can say for sure what heaven is like. All we can do is paint pictures involving symbolism. But one thing we can be sure of: Christ will be there to greet and meet us when we arrive *and* stay with us forever. That is what makes it Heaven. Where he is, there is life, and love, and peace.**

**You know a promise is only as good as the one who makes it. Who made these promises about our going to heaven? God himself is speaking through Jesus. Let us remember that God is not capricious. God is steadfast, constant, and forever dependable. God will keep his Word, now, and always. You can stand on these promises of Christ, not only today but in all the days ahead.**

**Because of God's promises we know that the lives of our saints are never lost. The Master will find a place for each in God's great house. They have been freed from infirmity to serve God in new strength and faithfulness. And they continue to serve you, too, now in the communion of saints and their memory will inspire you to follow their Savior, and to bind you closer to one another. We thank God for what he has given us through the saints who've gone before us.**

**Because of God's promises through the ages we can live in hope ... hope that we can experience His heavenly presence even in this life and that we will enjoy His full presence forever in the heavenly home prepared for those who put their trust in Him.**

***I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, Ephesians 1:18.***