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SERMON TITLE Top 5 Reasons I Want to Go to Heaven

SERIES

DATE 5/12/2024

KEY SCRIPTURE Various scriptures

SYNOPSIS There are some very inspiring reasons to want to go to heaven.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ Top 5 Reasons I Want to Go to Heaven

We've been talking about an Eternal Perspective. Too often we are overly focused on the here and now rather than all of eternity ahead. Jesus said there's an eternal reward for those who believe, but he also warned about eternal punishment for those who reject him. This is true for every person everywhere. We can suffer God's wrath or we can be saved. Eternity is at stake and you have a role to play. People need to call on the Lord. But first they need to believe in the Lord and they can only believe if they've heard. But, they can only hear if someone tells them. Who is that someone? You and me. Eternity is at stake and **you can affect someone's eternal destiny**. So, I've been thinking about eternity. Here are my top 5 reasons I want to make sure I end up there.

☞ (5) Rewards

Revelation 22:12

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.

☞ Matthew 25 tells us that those who are faithful servants in this life will receive a **commendation** from the Lord. We all like to receive **appreciation** and **approval**, and that will come from the Lord himself.

☞ Matthew 25 also talks about entering into the **joy** of the Lord. That sounds like a cool reward – no more sulking around, but abounding joy all the time.

Luke 22 tells us that we will also receive an inheritance and actually have some ownership within ☞ the kingdom. And, Luke 19 says that we will have various **positions of authority** and in fact help oversee the kingdom with Jesus.

A lady lost her handbag. It was found by an honest little boy and returned to her. Looking in her purse, she commented, "Hmm, that's funny. When I lost my bag there was a \$20 note in it. Now there are 20 \$1 coins." The boy replied, "That's right, lady. The last time I found a lady's purse, she didn't have any change for a reward."

☞ (4) The accommodations

John 14:2

In my Father's house are many (mansions); if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.

*--Carol Reddekop... One Sunday morning the pastor read John 14:2 to the congregation using a modern translation. His version read, "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places." Immediately an elderly lady stood up and said sternly, "Young man, I want you to read that Scripture again--from my Bible. I've lived in old, run-down houses all my life and I am looking ☞ forward to that **mansion!**"*



Revelation 21:1-2

☞ Then I saw **a new heaven and a new earth**, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

☞ It goes on to describe a city that **shines with the glory of God**; it's built with the finest materials; the main street is paved with pure gold; nothing impure will ever enter it. It will be the perfect place to live forever.

☞ (3) A New Body

1 Corinthians 15:42-49

The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body... just as we have borne the ☞ likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the **likeness of the man from heaven**.

Luke 24 tells about the resurrected Jesus... he could apparently teleport because he suddenly appeared in a locked room. But, he also had a **tangible** body because he encouraged the disciples to touch him and see that he had flesh and bones. He also ate with them.

☞ So, his **spiritual** body was also a physical body, but it was a major upgrade. Our improved bodies will be ideally suited to live in God's presence in heaven. Our current bodies would not be able to survive that.

☞ A little later in 1 Corinthians 15 we find that these new spiritual bodies will be **immortal**. And, Revelation 21 tells us that there will be no more death or sorrow or pain.

A common greeting of these days is, "How are you?" The stereotype reply is, "Fine, and how are you?" I frequently give this reply to my friends who would be dismayed and bored if I tried to tell them the truth, for the condition of this jalopy which I call my body is getting worse and worse, and my friends recognize it and make mental note, "He is slipping fast."

This jalopy is getting into bad condition. The steering gear is so worn and wobbly that I have to use a cane to keep it from running off the road. The headlights are so dim that they show up only about a half or a third as much as they used to. The horn is a mere squawk. I only get about a tenth of the speed out of it that it gave a few years ago. And as for climbing hills, or even gentler slopes, the less said the better. It is clear that it is going to have to be junked one of these days. But the real person who lives inside this jalopy is a different story. God is much more real and his truth shines more brightly. The companionship of Christ is more constant through His Holy Spirit, and He holds out a hope for a new model, after this jalopy is junked.

☞ (2) To be with Jesus

John 14:3

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.



- ☞ Revelation 22 says that we will actually **see his face** and it won't be only imagination. The song "It is Well," talks about the day when **faith will be sight**. It will be real.
- ☞ Just like the disciples after the resurrection, we will be able to physically **interact** with Jesus.
- ☞ And, **God** himself will be **dwelling with us** personally forever.

--Leith Anderson... My family and I have lived in the same house for seventeen years. We've lived there more than twice as long as I have lived at any other address in my entire life. I'll sometimes refer to it as "our house," but more often I refer to it as "home." What makes it home isn't the address or the lot or the garage or the architecture. What makes it home is the people.

You may live in a bigger or newer or better house than we live in, but as nice as your house may be, I would never refer to your house as home because the people who are most important to me don't live there. So what makes home home is the people in the relationships.

And what makes heaven heaven is not streets made out of gold, great fountains, lots of fun, and no smog. That all may well be. Actually, I think that heaven is far greater than our wildest imagination. The same God who designed the best of everything in this world, also designed heaven, only he took it to a far greater extent than anything we've ever seen. Yet, that's still not what makes heaven heaven.

What makes heaven heaven is God. It is being there with him. With his presence comes peace and contentment, a fulfillment, a sense that all is well. That is also a contentment that bubbles over into the rest of life. We can anticipate this future in the presence of God, we can be with him in a place where everything he wants happens the way he wants it to happen. And that affects this life as well.

☞ (1) To avoid hell

Luke 16:19-24

19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of ☞ his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in **agony** in this fire.'

Matthew 25 describes hell as darkness with weeping and gnashing of teeth. 2 Thessalonians 1 talks ☞ about everlasting **destruction** and ultimately being shut out from God's presence.

☞ And Revelation 20 says that the final destiny of anyone not in heaven is the **Lake of fire**.

Sigmund Freud's favorite story was about the sailor shipwrecked on one of the South Sea islands. He was seized by the natives, hoisted to their shoulders, carried to the village, and set on a rude throne. Little by little, he learned that it was their custom once each year to make some man a king, king for a year. He liked it until he began to wonder what happened to all the former kings. Soon



he discovered that every year when his kingship was ended, the king was banished to an island, where he starved to death. The sailor did not like that, but he was smart and he was king, king for a year. So he put his carpenters to work making boats, his farmers to work transplanting fruit trees to the island, farmers growing crops, masons building houses. So when his kingship was over, he was banished, not to a barren island, but to an island of abundance.

It is a good parable of life: We're all kings here, kings for a little while, able to choose what we shall do with the stuff of life.

Matthew 6:19-20

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

As I said last week, eternity is at stake for you and everyone you know. Living only for the moment, living only for this life is shortsighted. There is eternity ahead and I want to make it, and so do you, whether you realize it or not.

☞ In order to make it, the Bible says we need to **repent** of our sins and put our faith in Jesus, **trusting** him with our lives. It means living for the Lord while we are on this earth. If you want to make heaven you can't just be focused on the here and now, and you can't be apathetic about this Christian life.

☞ You've got to wholeheartedly **follow** Jesus.

Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 16:24-27:

"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 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 they have done.

Want to go to heaven? Then give your life to Jesus. I mean really give it up to him. Surrender your control and wishes, and follow him. Eternity is at stake. Don't be apathetic; don't reject Christ. Choose to follow him.