

What We Will Be Like in Heaven

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[0 : 00] Thank you so much for leading us. If you have your Bibles, turn to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, when we think of heaven, our curiosities run wild.

And as we wonder what it'll be like, and we try to figure it out, and we have a tendency to embellish the things that we're most concerned about. Sadly, what I've noticed over the years is people focus so much on the physical beauty and the materialistic aspects that they often miss the spiritual and the worshipful reality of heaven, which is the greatest part, by the way.

Heaven's not just about the walls of jewels and the streets of gold. Near as much as it is about the fulfillment of God's kingdom, about the opportunity of believers to see him face to face and to worship at the feet of Jesus.

Now, we still have our curiosities, and I want to deal with one today that I often am asked, and that is, what will we be like in heaven?

What will we be like in heaven? Let us never let our imagination leave the Bible and its revelations behind.

[1 : 26] The only evidence that we have of heaven on this earth is from the word of God, and it may not answer every question that we have in our mind, but it answers all we need to know.

And so I want to talk this morning about what we will be like in heaven, and I hope this morning is more than just a, more than just giving you curious facts, but instead to see the Lord of heaven, to sense his glory, and to allow him to move in our individual lives.

1 Thessalonians chapter 4, beginning in verse 13, it says, But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may grieve as others do who have no hope.

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so through Jesus God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not perceive those who have fallen asleep.

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of the archangel, with the sound of the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

[2 : 44] Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with him in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. And my favorite verse of this impactful passage is verse 18 when it says, Therefore, encourage one another with these words.

My friend, this is not all there is. Thank God. And if you are a child of God, you have a lot to look forward to. And I want to talk about that this morning because we're describing this morning what we will be like in heaven.

It is simple to explain, yet complex to understand. It's a concept that we can try to imagine, yet one that we have never seen, and one that we'll have a hard time grasping.

To state simply, what will we be like in heaven? Well, we'll be perfect. We'll be perfect. Did you catch that?

Do you understand that? I don't think we understand that. But the Bible helps us understand it as best as we can. There are several ways we'll be perfect in heaven.

[4 : 02] One is our salvation will be perfect. Now, salvation is made up of three processes. It begins with conversion or regeneration.

That's when we give our hearts and lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. When we surrender our lives to follow Him. We convert from running our own lives down the wide wrong path, as Christ put it, and give all that we have over to God to walk in His less traveled right path.

That is a heartfelt commitment on our behalf and a promise on His behalf. And my friend, if that has never happened to you, you have an open invitation today, not only from me, but more importantly,

from the Lord Jesus Christ to surrender your life to the Lord Jesus today and allow Him to regenerate you, to convert you, as He put it, to be born again.

Once that happens, the second stage of our salvation is the sanctification process. And sanctification is the process of our Christian life.

It is in our salvation, we are declared holy. He has set us apart. That's what that word means. Don't mean perfect. It means set apart for His purposes. And as He sets us apart, He begins a process in our lives to help us to walk and be more like Him, to be made more holy.

[5 : 40] Chuck Swindoll wrote a book years ago called Three Steps Forward and Two Steps Back. That kind of describes the Christian life. We begin to progress and then we have setbacks in our lives. But you know, if you go three steps forward and two steps back, that's a step of progress.

And the job of the sanctification, what we need to be doing in our sanctification is growing in the Lord, becoming more like Him. And then one day, there'll be glorification. Now some folks may look like they've reached glorification, but they haven't yet if you're still walking around with them, okay? And that is the perfecting of our salvation. That completes our salvation. In Romans 8, verse 30, it tells us that whom God has justified, thank God, He's also glorified.

Justify means who He's made right. That's done through conversion. The glorifying speaks of the perfecting. And it's the promise that we will be made perfect in eternity.

As 1 John 3, 2 says, we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. Now, as far as being perfect in our salvation, I want to make sure you know two truths today.

[6 : 50] One is, if you're here this morning, you're not there yet, okay? You are not perfect in your salvation. Don't pretend to be. We know better, okay? Preach done said it.

You ain't perfect. You're not there yet. We are frail human beings in need of a Lord and Savior every day. We are not there yet.

We are not perfect. The second truth, if you're a child of God today and have given your heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be perfect. You will be.

The perfecting of our salvation is the completion of our salvation, and that happens in eternity, and that only comes in eternity. If we die before the Lord returns, our souls will go to heaven.

Upon His return, we'll be unified again with our bodies. That is what 1 Thessalonians 4 speaks of. However, our bodies won't be like they are here.

[7 : 51] Our bodies will be perfect. How can we know what our glorified heavenly bodies will be like?

Well, there's some evidence in Scripture, some things that I've touched on in the last few weeks that I'll hit again quickly. And it comes from a few descriptions in the Bible of the post-resurrection body of Christ.

Luke 24 tells us about the glorified body of Christ, that He could be touched and He could be handled. He was not merely a fathom or a ghost.

In Luke 24, verse 39, He said, See my hands, my feet? That is, I myself. Touch me and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.

He looked human. However, when He was on the road to Emmaus, they never questioned His humanity. They knew He was human, but they were slow to recognize Him.

[8 : 52] They didn't quite recognize Him. In that glorified body, He ate real food with His friends. Yet He passed through solid walls or through a locked door. Hello?

It's a little different. He could appear in ways in which His identity was not immediately known. He could suddenly appear and disappear out of nowhere. We see no evidence of that in the Gospels before the resurrected body.

And He ascended into heaven in bodily form. And my friend, that is as close on earth as we can understand of our heavenly existence. Now, how much of that applies to us and our future?

I don't know. Let's be honest with you. I don't know. But Paul said this. In Philippians chapter 3, verse 21, he says this. But our citizenship is in heaven. And from it, we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body.

How many of you feel like you got a lowly? No, you don't have to say it. Will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

[10 : 01] In 2 Corinthians 5, verse 1, Paul calls our body an earthly tent, but shares that we will have an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

And I want you to listen to this passage. It's in 1 Thessalonians chapter 15. It's 42 through 44 and 50 through 57. Listen to this. So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable. That means what you put in the ground when you die. What is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor. It is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness.

It is raised in power. It is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there's also a spiritual body.

He goes on to say in verse 50, I tell you, brothers, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery.

[11:02] We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. Now let me clarify something real quick, okay? Because he refers to this sleep a couple of times. Do not believe that when somebody dies, that their soul rests with that body that you put in the casket and that you put that body and soul in the ground.

No, no. The body lays there for a time. But the soul is in the presence of the Lord. The apostle Paul said to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

I'll give you further evidence in future days about the instantaneous nature. As I called it a few weeks ago, one minute after you die, and I'm just giving you about 59 seconds of grace because I really believe that when your eyes close in death, they'll open in eternity, whatever that may mean for you.

So the reality is, when he says sleep here, don't ever believe that one that passes away is sleep. They're not talking about the soul. Soul sleep is a heresy. Not at all. It's that body that's resting there. But he says, listen, we shall not all sleep.

[12:24] We shall all be changed. Because in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body put on immortality. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank God that he takes care of us and will provide for us and gives us the victory. Our bodies will be made perfect. Not only that, but our minds will be perfect.

Our minds will be perfect. In 1 Corinthians chapter 13, verse 12, Paul put it so well, he said for this, for now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face.

Now I know in part, but then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. Now when it says that we will know fully, I don't believe that's speaking of perfect omniscience.

[13:38] I believe that's what it speaks of, because I believe there's evidence of other ways. And let me assure you, you will not turn into gods, as some cults say you will. It does mean that we'll know things on a much more comprehensive level than we do here.

In other words, our minds will be as complete as we could ever desire. Therefore, the questions that you have about heaven, if you ever say, you know, when I die and I get to heaven, I'm going to ask, let me tell you my personal opinion.

No, you ain't. No, you ain't. You're going to be so caught up in the atmosphere of being in the presence of the Lord, I believe the questions that are digging at you today will be answered instantaneously.

I believe you'll know. I believe the questions you have about this life that sometimes nobody can answer for you.

I believe if you're a child of God and you die in the Lord instantly, there'll be answered. There'll be no more ums. There'll be no more confusion.

[14:50] There'll be no more forgetting, no more ignorance, no more needing to walk by faith. Hello? We'll know it then. We'll walk by sight.

Our minds will be made perfect. The fourth thing is our love will be perfect. If I told you I had seven points this morning, when I started it had scared you to death. But we more than halfway there.

Our love will be perfect. Now when we look at 1 Corinthians 13 we see a pattern of love to live by. However, we cannot fulfill that completely.

It is the goal to set forth. We should not forgive our, we should not excuse ourselves from some that we're not so good at. We ought to work harder at it. Do more for it.

However, we won't fulfill it completely. Much like the examples of Christ in our lives, we won't fulfill those things. 1 Corinthians 13 closes out the love chapter saying this, Now faith, hope, and love

abide.

[15:50] These three, but the greatest of these is love. love. Why is love the greatest of that? Because it's the one that is eternal that's there.

Because you see, our faith will be fulfilled when we see Him face to face. Our hope will be met. Our love will be made complete and be perfect.

Thank God. Our love will be perfect. Fifth thing is our joy will be perfect. The Christian has the opportunity in this life to live in the joy of the Lord.

However, that joy is not perfect. That joy is not perfect. Sin, sorrow, discouragement, loss, worry, all that stuff gets in the way.

But that will not be the case, thank God, in eternity. in the account of the beggar Lazarus. There's a couple of Lazarus in scripture. The account of the beggar Lazarus, he was comforted when he went to heaven after he lived a tough life on earth.

[17:00] And in the same way, thank God, there'll be no more sin, there'll be no more sorrow, there'll be no more discouragement, there'll be no more worry. Matthew 25 verse 23 says that we will be invited to come and share our master's happiness.

In other words, we will be welcomed into the joy of the Lord. Our joy will be perfect. Now I think you ought to practice that here, okay?

But it ain't going to be perfect until we see him face to face. Listen, our relationships will be perfect. Not only will the relationships that we know on earth be enhanced by sinlessness, but we'll know those in heaven that we didn't know on earth.

If Peter, James, and John recognize Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration, if Lazarus and the rich man were known in eternity, then so shall we be.

Jesus said in Matthew 8 verse 11 that we should sit down together at the feast in eternity. And unlike some of those sit-downs that you're a part of now, there'll be no family squabbles in glory.

[18:23] You know? There'll be no bickering at the table. Thank God there'll be no politics in glory. No talk of that.

Nothing to divide. We won't even get tired of each other. Our relationships, thank God, will be perfected. But not only that, but our worship will be perfected.

You know why? To put simply, we'll see him face to face. We'll see him face to face. 1 Corinthians 13 verse 12 tells us that we shall know him like we can't hear.

We'll know him. It says, for now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

We will enjoy unhindered, no longer clouded by sin, separation, ignorance, all those things. The greatest delight that we will ever experience in heaven, the greatest delight will be seeing him face to face as we reign with him.

[19:35] Revelation 22 verse 3 through 5 says, forever we'll reign with him. Now how do you respond to all that?

Well, 1 Corinthians 15, Paul describes the resurrection. He describes the glorified state, and he closes out with this, his purpose for sharing it.

In 1 Corinthians 15 verse 58, he says this, therefore my beloved brothers, talking about today folks, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing, thank God, that the work, that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

What difference does it make? It ought to make a difference today in how we live. Fanny Crosby wrote some of the greatest hymns that's ever been written.

I'm not going to sing, don't panic. But she wrote a hymn, and it says this, when my life work is ended, and I cross the swelling tide, when the bright and glorious morning I shall see, I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side, and his smile will be the first to welcome me.

[21:08] I shall know him, I shall know him, and redeemed by his side, I shall stand.

I shall know him, I shall know him by the prints of the nails in his hand. Fanny Crosby was born blind.

She never saw a thing in this life. How wonderful it must have been to know that the first thing that she would ever see would be the smile of the Savior welcoming her into eternity.

And the same is true for you. You shall see him like you never have. And you shall see you like you never have.

What difference does that make in our life today? Well, my friend, if there's never been a time in your life when you've asked the Lord Jesus to forgive you, to cleanse you, that you've asked him to remove the sin in your life and acknowledge the fact that you've done wrong, if that's never happened to you, thank God today's the day of salvation.

[22 : 43] And if you ask the Lord Jesus to forgive you of your sins, to come into your life and save you, I thank God today he'll do it. He's the one that gives you the passion to do it.

He's the one that came to you. You just respond to him in obedience. I want to be clear. If that's never happened to you, and you were to slip into eternity today, it's not a threat, it's just the truth. If you were to slip into eternity today, you would forever be separated from the Father. Forever. Hell's just as real as heaven. If you've never given your heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ, come today, I'd love to guide you in that process.

Maybe you're here and you have done that privately, but you've never told anybody about it. You've never made that public. And Scripture tells us that the way we do that is to acknowledge that just the way that Christ gave us an example.

He didn't even need it, but he gave us an example of being baptized as a believer. If you've never acknowledged your faith in Christ publicly by baptism, I encourage you to come this morning.

[23 : 53] We'd love to line that up. We're not going to do it right now. We'll love to line that up in the days ahead. Maybe God's drawing you to this church, and you know this is where you are to serve.

We'd love to guide you in that process. I encourage you to come. Or maybe you just got stuff going on. You're just burdened about stuff.

You just got weight in your life that you need relief from. I'd love to pray with you. Or you can come to these stairs and make this your altar and just lift that up to the Lord.

You can do it where you are. I'll never ask you to do anything more than what God tells you to do. And I'm going to try my best never let you be satisfied doing anything less than what God tells you to do.

Just obey him today and trust him. Lord Jesus, I love you and I thank you for your love for us. And I ask, oh God, today that you'll guide us to simply follow your will, to simply do what you tell us to do, dear God.

[24 : 58] I'm thankful for an eternity that we can rest in when we leave this place. But until we do, dear God, help us to live for you. Help us to make the decisions that please you. Guide us today.

Right now to be obedient to follow your will and your way in our hearts and lives. We love you dearly. Thank you for the privilege. In Jesus' name, amen.