

Heaven

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[0 : 00] You find that passage on page 901 of our church Bibles. Let's read again the first two verses of John 14, where Jesus says to his disciples, Let not your hearts be troubled.

Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, we have told you that I go to prepare a place for you.

In my Father's house are many rooms. Jesus speaking of heaven. And last Sunday evening, those of you who were here, remember, we began a short series on really the various matters relating to the death of a Christian.

And we looked last Sunday evening at the whole aspect of the Christian soul after death. We saw from Scripture that God's Word teaches us of the soul's immediate entry into the glory of heaven after the body expires.

And we learned of the wonderful truth of the soul being fully awake. We might even say more awake than it's ever been in praising God in the glory of heaven.

[1 : 18] The soul beholds the face of the Lord Jesus. And we recognize that in the death of the Christian, the glorious truth, yes, that the soul is with the Savior.

The soul beholding the one who gave his life for that soul and for all who are gathered in the glory of heaven. And so I want to continue our thoughts on this whole aspect of death and heaven.

And indeed, it's, God willing, next Lord's Day evening when we are going to consider the resurrection of all, the resurrection from the dead. And God willing, the week after the new heavens and the new earth.

But this evening we want to see what the Bible teaches us about heaven. Especially as we find that teaching here in John chapter 14, the teaching that Jesus gives to his disciples.

And it's teaching that really should give every Christian encouragement and anticipation of that fuller glory to come. And yet, if you've not yet given your life to the Lord Jesus, well, listen carefully.

[2 : 36] Listen with your heart. Listen. Because what God's Word teaches us, what we're about to consider, is of eternal importance.

And I pray that you will be led in heart and mind to think on these precious truths that we find here in John 14 and of course elsewhere in Scripture that teaches us about heaven and about the only way whereby anyone, any soul, can find that true rest in the glory of heaven.

But let's think about this passage here. Let's think, first of all, how Jesus comes to give this particular teaching. because, you know, when we see the context, we realize that Jesus is nearing the end of his three-year ministry.

He's, as we know, he's gathered around him 12 disciples, disciples who are going to be with Jesus as Jesus teaches and preaches, as Jesus performs miracles, as Jesus shows by his teaching, by his preaching, by his miracles, that he truly is the promised Messiah, that truly is the promised Christ.

He's come to save his people from their sins. And that moment when Jesus will bear the sins of his people, that moment that's going to happen on the cross, it's about to happen.

[4 : 01] And, in fact, if we were to go way back to chapter 12, verse 27, we find there Jesus telling his disciples that his heart is troubled. He's troubled at the whole prospect of what's lying ahead of him.

He's going to die. He's going to die for the sins of his people. Jesus, the one through whom life was created, Jesus is going to give his life for others.

I mean, Jesus, who knew no sin in his heart, he's going to be made sin for us. And his heart, his soul, is troubled. He's troubled at the prospect of, obviously, his death, his prospect particularly of his sin bearing.

He's going to face the justice of God. He's going to be made a curse of God. Jesus is going to be that substitute for sinners. He's going to take the place of sinners on the cross.

He's going to face the wrath of God against sin. And he's troubled. And he's troubled. And yet, and notice what we see at the start of chapter 14. And yet, despite his heart being troubled, it's Jesus who gives comfort to his disciples when they're troubled.

[5 : 16] And Jesus starts to tell them things that, you know, they could scarce take in. So they're in that room, that upper room in Jerusalem. And this is a short time before Jesus' death.

Jesus tells his disciples that one of them is going to betray him. And that betrayer, Judas Iscariot, he departs from the room. He's going to go out to betray Jesus.

And Jesus tells his 11 disciples that, as we saw at the end of chapter 13, he's just going to be with them for a short time more. And then he's going to go to where his disciples can't, well, can't immediately follow him.

And, you know, this troubles the disciples. They can't quite take in what Jesus is saying. I mean, they've been with Jesus these three years. They've had a security with Jesus.

They've been with him. They've seen him, if you like, in action. They've seen him in his marvelous works, in his marvelous words. But now what Jesus is telling them about his going away, this sows seeds of uncertainty in their hearts.

[6 : 22] what's the future going to hold for them? And it's at that point, when they're down in their heart, that Jesus comforts them with the comfort of the promises that we read there about their eternal comfort, about their eternal security.

He tells them that where he's going to, well, he's going to his father's house. That place of rest, that place of comfort, that place of eternal rest in him, that place that Jesus has prepared for them.

You know, I think that, you know, as the disciples are so troubled, and at that point in their depth of trouble, Jesus comforts them. And isn't that so often the way, even in your own lives, when you are, as it were, at times at rock bottom, when you're troubled in your heart, even about your faith, about your trust, about even God's love for you, that the Word of God steps in.

The Word gives you that comfort and assurance that you're safe in the Lord Jesus, that he is with you as you are with him. And Jesus here is giving that comfort that his disciples, when they are, as it were, at the depth and the depth.

But Jesus, you see, Jesus' love for them is such that Jesus has shown them the bigger picture. And this bigger picture involves eternity.

[7 : 53] The eternal security of the soul of believers in, as Jesus says, my Father's house in heaven. This place, this place of eternal comfort.

And what we want to see then, as Jesus teaches here, is, as we said, for your encouragement. If you're in Christ, if you know him as Saviour, be encouraged with what you read here and what you hear here.

And be warmed. As you're worshipping God even now, be warmed in your heart that what Jesus is giving for your information is teaching that tells you wonderful things.

The wonder, the wonderful place of heaven. That place that is real. That place of glory.

That place that you await as your journey towards heaven continues until, until God calls you home.

And for you who've given your life to Jesus, this is your eternal prospect.

[8 : 59] your heavenly home. But if you've not yet given your life to Jesus, don't ignore what you're going to be hearing in the next 20 minutes or so. Because this is of the utmost importance in your life as it is in all our lives.

So we've mentioned the word place. And this is what Jesus teaches us here. I mean, just think carefully what Jesus is saying. As you see in verse 2, in my Father's house or many rooms if it were not so with it, I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you.

A place. What's a place? A place is somewhere that's real. It's a location. It's not a sort of a state of mind. It's not some kind of, you know, made up kind of thing that you read off in imaginative thought.

No. Jesus speaks of the place called heaven. It's as real as anywhere else. It's as real as any physical location. Because who dwells there?

Jesus. The risen Christ dwells there. The souls of just men and women made perfect are dwelling in heaven. But then you might ask, well, what kind of a place is heaven?

[10 : 20] What does God's work teach us? What does Jesus teach us here? Well, there's a number of things we can deduce from even this little passage. And, you know, when Jesus refers to heaven as my Father's house, surely he's speaking of a place of peace, a place of security, a place of rest for all who love the Lord Jesus.

If you like, heaven is a haven. It's that haven of rest. It's home. It's home. Of course, no ordinary home. This is the home that you're called to when after your body, as it were, expires, your soul arrives home, the home of the Christian, the home of God, the home of Jesus.

And, you know, when you think of home, or we might say the ideal sense of home, what do you think of? In the ideal sense, you think of shelter, you think of security, you think of a place of safety, you think of a place of warmth and togetherness, you think of all the emotional security, and as I say, an ideal home, the ideal home gives.

Like the phrase, there's no place like home, and I know that the ideal very rarely is, or not always, is the case. But, when we think of the home, the heavenly home for the believer that Jesus has prepared, then this truly is the place of eternal comfort, eternal security, eternal togetherness, if you like.

And is that your yearning? Your yearning to be in that place of peace, to be in heaven, that place that Paul spoke of when he spoke of heaven being far better, far better than even his life on earth.

[12 : 18] Because what we're told here helps us to see that heaven is far better because, well, we've noticed it's a place of peace, but it's also a prepared place.

Jesus said, I go to prepare a place for you. And, you know, Jesus is speaking the language of the culture of the time when the bridegroom, the bridegroom would go to his house, to the house where the bride and he would live and he'd prepare that home for the bride to come to.

And, surely this is Jesus telling us that he's the bridegroom and he's preparing a place for you, for his church, for his bride.

The church is the bride of Christ. And so Jesus, I'm preparing a place for you. And that's surely telling you of his love for you, just as a bridegroom loves his bride.

So Christ loves his church. If he's preparing a place for you, he's telling you of his love. He's telling you that you are his. He's telling you that you're going to share with every other believer in Christ.

[13 : 27] You're going to share in that love. It's a love that's eternal. It's a love that's pure. And just think, you know, think on that great truth that Jesus is the bridegroom.

Jesus has already prepared that place for you in heaven. That place where the souls of all the righteous in Christ inhabit with countless, millions upon millions, countless number of those who are with Christ and in Christ.

And that really takes us on to, you know, another aspect of heaven that brings so much comfort and encouragement to you, even now, because it's a populated place.

In my Father's house are many rooms. And I suppose you'll know that the original word for rooms here that Jesus uses is more the meaning of a dwelling place, a place where you remain.

In other words, there's enough room for everyone in heaven, everyone who believes. There's enough room for you who've given your life to Jesus. There's not going to be one room too many.

[14 : 38] There's not going to be one room too few. Jesus has prepared your place in heaven. And that dwelling place that's yours is secure.

It's eternal. And you're going to be there with all of God's people. You're going to be with loved ones who've gone before you into heaven. You're going to be with every saint from Old Testament times, every saint from New Testament times.

You're going to be with every believer who's lived through history. You're going to share in a populated place. You're going to know the company of saints.

You're going to know the company of angels eternally. You're going to be with the Lord Jesus. You know, Jesus in life had nowhere to lay his head.

He promises the vastness of heaven as your eternal resting place when you've given your life to Jesus. So, heaven is a place. It's a populated place.

[15 : 41] It's a prepared place. It's a peaceful place. And we have to go on to say it's a perfect place. Where I am, Jesus says, where I am, the sinless Son of God, where I am, you may be also.

In the book of Hebrews, the letter to the Hebrews, the author wrote this, Hebrews 12, but you've come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the city of the living God.

You've come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. You've come to God, the judge of all men. And then these words, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect.

Righteous men and women made perfect. perfect. And we noticed this last Lord's Day evening, what we call our subordinate standards, our summary of Christian doctrine, Christian teaching, our shorter catechism tells us this.

The souls of believers are at their death, made perfect in holiness, and you're immediately passing to glory. And this again is amazing grace, amazing truth.

[16:50] the perfection of the soul in death. It can only happen to fit the soul to be in heaven with our sinless saviour there in the perfection of heaven.

And that, you know, being with Jesus, being with Jesus, that's surely a glorious prospect for you who are in Christ by faith.

So that you who are in Christ, when you think of heaven, think of that place where your soul will be with Christ. And indeed the souls of loved ones, even now with the Lord Jesus.

Saved souls with Christ in the glory of that heavenly home because heaven is where Jesus is. And it's a place then that believers should long to be.

I mean, we mentioned the Apostle Paul earlier. We read in 2 Corinthians 5, Paul had a prospect of heaven. He yearned to be with the Lord Jesus. It was his heart's desire.

[17:58] In fact, in Philippians 1, another part of one of his letters, he spoke about being with Christ in heaven. It's far better than being on the earthly side of eternity.

And as we read in 2 Corinthians 5, Paul spoke about heaven, being at home with the Lord. And that's the wonderful truth. Jesus wants you to be with him.

To be with him in the glory of heaven. And in the perfect timing of God, when God calls you home, you'll know that joy of being with the Saviour whom you gave your life to on earth.

He desires you to be with him in his Father's house. you know, in that prayer that Jesus offered just before his death that you read later in John's Gospel, Jesus prayed for all believers.

Jesus asked his Father that they be with him where he is. See, the desire of Jesus for his people to be with him. Again, that speaks of his love.

[19:08] His love for all for whom he came to die. he wants you to be with him. You have sinned against him as I've sinned against him so many times.

In our nature, we're rebels against God. We've denied him. We've broken his law. And yet, he wants you to be with him because of his great love for sinners.

Jesus, as we've seen, Jesus promised his disciples that he was going to his Father's house to prepare a place for them. Well, Jesus, then, we might say as we continue in that vein, Jesus gives you that assurance that he's prepared a place for everyone who's his.

Because he wants you to be there. He wants you to be with him in that perfect time when, as we said, when God calls you home as his people. That's the love of Jesus.

But I think there's more to be said. There's much more to be said, you know, in being with Christ in the perfection of heaven. And surely that's this, that Jesus wants you to see his glory.

[20:20] Jesus wants you to see the glory that he had before he came to the world. See, after Jesus died, after he rose again, he ascended into heaven to be with his Father.

And Paul tells us elsewhere that Jesus is now seated at the right hand of the Father on the throne of heaven. And with Jesus there, we have that assurance that we'll see him face to face.

What will you see in heaven where Jesus says that he's prepared a place for you and that where he is? What will you see? You'll see the nail-pierced hands that held him on the cross.

You'll see the nail-pierced feet that also held him on the cross. You'll see the spear-pierced sign. You'll see the face of love in the face of the Lord Jesus.

You'll see the Lord who was crucified for you, the Lamb of God slain for you. And you'll see the perfection of grace looking on you.

[21:23] And as you look to the Saviour, you'll see his eyes of love shining on you. You'll see his glory. You'll see the glory of Jesus.

You'll see his love. You'll see his grace. You'll see Jesus. The great Scottish minister Robert Murray McChain, he summed all this up in one of his hymns.

When I stand before the throne dressed in beauty not my own, when I see thee as thou art, love thee with unsinning heart, then Lord shall I fully know not till then how much I owe.

when we are before the Lord Jesus, that throne in heaven, we'll be then. As we'll know fully how much you owe, how much I owe to the Lord Jesus, even there being in his presence, there in glory in that place called heaven.

But then what else does Jesus teach us here about heaven? He teaches us about a path, the path to heaven, where Jesus speaks to Thomas, doubting Thomas, we don't know where you're going, how can we know the way?

[22 : 34] And Jesus says to him verse 6, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Jesus says there's a path to heaven and that path is Jesus, the way.

He's the way, He's the truth, He's the life. He's the way, the only way to heaven. There's no other way except through Jesus, except through faith in the Lord Jesus, the Savior.

And Jesus is telling the truth here as He is. Then none of us can ever preach anyone into heaven. You can't say, oh, such and such a person's suffering's over unless that person has given his or her life to Jesus on earth.

And there's so much nonsense, so much unbiblical nonsense that's sprigged again and again when it seems that everyone's given a place in heaven irrespective of their faith in the Lord Jesus on earth.

No, only if you've given your life to Jesus, only if you have walked on that path that is Jesus, the way to heaven, only then will you know the comfort and joy of being with the Savior.

[23 : 51] What did Paul, or what did Peter rather say, there's salvation in no one else, for there's no other name under heaven. given among men by which we must be saved.

You see, the path to heaven is Christ, through Christ. He's the way, the only way. We know that utterly undeserved on our part, utterly unmerited, but it's through his grace, through his saving grace, that you are found on that path that leads to heaven.

and it's one way, one way and only one way, and that one way is via the cross. And on that one way, you walk with Christ, you walk in him, you are on that path that leads directly to glory.

and you'll know when you are on that path and you make that arrival, that grand arrival, then you know that you'll be with him.

And that you'll be with all who are his. And then we think finally of the people, the people in heaven. What does Jesus say? I go to prepare a place for you.

[25 : 07] In verse 2, verse 3, I will come again and take you to be myself, that where I am, you, maybe also three times in just a few words, Jesus directs these words to those whom he's teaching to you.

I mean, okay, in the immediate sense he's been speaking to his disciples, the righteous ones made righteous by Jesus. But he's speaking to you who are in him.

Somebody said heaven's the place of eternal reunions. Heaven's the place where all of God's people are after death. Heaven, we have to say, is the place only for those who are in Christ.

Now, of course, many people say that's just sheer arrogance. The common retort is, well, heaven's a place for people of all faiths and, well, good people, whether they're Christians or not.

During the First World War, done it in school, some of you young ones, I'm sure, but the scale of casualty was absolutely immense. It was like nothing had ever happened until, certainly until about 1916.

[26 : 19] And certain clergymen in Scotland at the time, they preached and they actually wrote that soldiers who died in battle, they said, for a good cause, would go straight to heaven.

That'd be the reward, heaven. Never mind if they believed in Christ and earth. They'd given their life and sacrifice, they'd followed Jesus who gave his life and sacrifice, therefore their place would be in heaven.

But listen to the word of Jesus. When Jesus was confronted by Thomas, Thomas wasn't sure where Jesus was going. And we repeat what we said just a moment ago so that you're absolutely clear about that way to heaven, about who is in heaven, those who know Jesus as Savior, who know Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life.

And Jesus couldn't be more clear when he spoke to Thomas. There's no other way. The only way is the Lord Jesus. You only come to that heavenly home by faith in the Savior.

And it's not by work, it's not by any kind of self-sacrifice, whether it's good things that you've done on earth, they don't qualify you for heaven, only the work of Jesus on the cross, and by his perfect life of obedience, that's the only work that can entitle you to heaven.

[27 : 49] And you believe, and by grace, you're saved, and know the blessing of being found in Christ, and the blessing of knowing that your place, is heaven.

And what Jesus says, then we hold as absolute truth, that only a person, only a person who's given his or her life to Christ, can know the prospect of heaven, and ultimately the joy of heaven.

There'll be people in heaven who are the vilest sinners on earth, who came to know Jesus through faith in him, who gave their lives to him, who repented of their sins and came to the Savior in faith.

And they'll be in heaven. There'll be those who at one time hurled abuse Christ, even who, like Paul, who persecuted the people of Jesus, but whom Jesus came to save.

There'll be people in heaven who even mocked even the thought of heaven itself. They'll be there because by God's grace they turned to Jesus and repented of their sins.

[29 : 09] The chief of sinners will be there, the great reciprocates, the poor in spirit, the ones who were once blind, blind in faith, but now see because their eyes were opened by the Spirit.

Jesus said, I've not come to call the righteous, but sinners. To repentance. And whoever you are, whatever you are, if you've given your life to Jesus, if you've confessed your sins to him, if you've believed in his name, if you've followed him and him alone, if you know that he's died and believe absolutely that he's died for your sins, you have that promise of heaven to be with Christ forever.

That's a cast iron guarantee. Jesus, remember a few weeks ago we were thinking of Jesus' words, come unto me, all you who labour and are heaven laden and I will give you rest, that rest in him that you enjoy now and the fullness of that rest in heaven.

So the question has to be asked, will you be in the glory of heaven? Will you be with Christ, with him, with all the saints who are in heaven?

Or will you know, or will you not know that glory? glory? glory. You have been given, there is that free offer of salvation in Jesus. There's that invitation that even now has been given out to come to Jesus and to receive him into your heart.

[30 : 40] He keeps his promise. He's the promise keeper. He keeps his promise, the promise to make his abode with you in your heart so that you'll never be lost, so that you'll know the glory of heaven and not know the eternal pain of hell.

Do you want to be with Christ? Do you want to be with him or without him? Do you want to have that eternal joy in heaven? Do you want to be in the house of God the Father?

Or are you just going to remain outside that house forever? A few days ago, a saint in the Lord died. I don't know if you knew him, I'm sure.

The Reverend Norman McKeever, a godly minister from Harris. He was an evangelical in the Church of Scotland. And there was an obituary that was written off him. And these words, when I read them, were very poignant.

The words said this, We shall miss him in this world, but we rejoice at the same time that Norrie is now with the Lord Jesus. We recall with overwhelming gladness the words of Paul the apostle who wrote, To live is Christ and to die is gain.

[31 : 55] We can only imagine the joy that now belongs to Norrie. Speaking of another soul, now with Christ in the glory of heaven, his gain is immeasurable.

Will his gain, that same gain, be your gain? Or is the world your home? Listen again to the words of Jesus. What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?

I pray that your gain will be heaven and not the false gain of the world. That you'll truly know that yes, heaven is your home, that place of peace, that perfect place, that place where the Lord awaits yes, the souls of his people to be with him.

And indeed to be with him there in heaven awaiting the resurrection of the body on that day when Jesus returns. That truth that we're going to consider more God willing next Lord's Day evening.

But I ask again, what is your gain? What is the prospect of your gain? Is it heaven? Or is it the world? Because if it's not heaven, then I have to say from the authority of scripture that you will be lost from all in all eternity.

[33 : 23] But knowing the Saviour, the Saviour of the Lord Jesus, knowing him, you have that gain, you have that promise, eternal life in the glory of heaven of Jesus forever.

Amen. Let us pray. O Lord, our God, you give us many solemn truths to consider, to dwell on. And may it be, Lord, that as we have considered these truths this evening, that we will know and have that prospect of heaven before us.

Lord, teach us to live in the light of eternity, in the light of heaven. Teach us, Lord, how we must live here with that prospect before us. be with any this evening, Lord, who are struggling, maybe even struggling in their lives.

And Lord, may it be with any this evening who has not yet given their life to you. Be with them, Lord. Strengthen them. Give them that desire to know you and to follow you all the days of their life with the prospect of heaven before them.

Hear us, Lord, as we continue to worship you now. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, let's close in Psalm 16 on page 17.

[34 : 52] We're going to sing from verse 7 to the end. The tune is Busser. I'll praise the Lord, my God, whose counsel guides my choice.

And even in the night, my heart recalls instruction's voice. Verse 10, For you will not allow my soul in death to stay, nor will you leave your holy one to see the tombs decay.

You have made known to me the path of life divine. Bliss shall I know it, your right hand joy from your face will shine. 7 to 11, Psalm 16, to God's praise.