

The most valuable things in life are not things

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April 26 2009

A little girl was standing outside her Sunday School classroom when the pastor noticed she was holding a big storybook entitled, "Jonah and the Whale." The pastor wanted to have some fun with her so he asked her, "Do you really believe that Jonah was swallowed by a whale?" The little girl frowned and declared, "Of course I do!" The pastor pushed her a bit and said, "You really believe that a man can be swallowed by a big whale, stay inside for three days and then come out and still be alive?" The little girl said, "Absolutely. The story is in the Bible and we studied it in Sunday School today."

Then the pastor asked, "Can you prove to me that the story is true?" She thought for a moment and then said, "Well, when I get to Heaven, I'll ask Jonah." The pastor was on a roll and asked, "Well, what if Jonah's not in Heaven?" She then put her hands on her little hips and sternly declared, "Then you can ask him yourself!"

Heaven or hell?

As usual, we will start with scripture that is not the passage we are going to study, let's start in Genesis and end in Revelations, jumping back and forth and passing by our passage, somewhere in the New Testament, so hold on!

Genesis 5 23-24

So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him

365 years sound like a very long life, we would all have around 300 more to go but if we consider that before him Cainan lived 910 years, Mahalalel lived 895, Jared lived 962 years and after him

Methuselah lived 969, Lamech lived 777 and Noah lived 950 years, then Enoch had a short life. However, he is one of the two cases registered on the bible of people who went to heaven but did not die. The other is Elijah:

2 Kings 2 11

Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven

And then other times God changes the length of lives to meet His purposes, check this out:

2 Kings 20 5-6b

Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord. And I will add to your days 15 years."

And then we have many examples of people dying, some with clear destination in heaven. A few of them are:

Genesis 28 8

Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people

Luke 23 42-43

Then he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom. And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise"

Later in the bible we also have many healings, demons cast out, the blind, deaf, paralytic, mute, etc. cured and restored and even dead raised to life by Jesus.

I could give you endless examples but I'm pretty sure you all know that long or short, extended or shortened, cured or restored, dying or being lifted, our life here is not permanent and is very brief compared to eternity.

James 4 14

Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away

And where are you going afterwards? Earth is the warm up act. This isn't the big deal. You're going to spend 60, 70, 80 maybe 90 years here on earth. But you'll spend thousands, millions of years in eternity -- heaven or hell. This is just preparation for the big event.

Luke 16 22-25

So it was that the beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Then he cried and said, `Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame´. But Abraham said, `Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

Now our passage, and then we'll continue with our journey into heaven.

Matthew 6 19-21

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

If I had to describe our material times I would say:

Today

We are buying things we don't need, with money we don't have, to impress people we don't even like!!

George W. Truett, a well known preacher was invited to dinner at the home of a very wealthy man in Texas. After the meal, the host led him to a place where they could get a good view of the surrounding area.

Pointing to the oil wells, punctuating the landscape, he boasted, "Twenty five years ago, I had nothing. Now as far as you can see, it's all mine." Looking in the opposite direction, at his sprawling fields of grain, he said, "That's all mine." Turning east toward huge herds of cattle, he bragged, "They're all mine too." Then, pointing to the west and a beautiful forest, he exclaimed, "That too is all mine." He paused expecting Dr. Truett to compliment him on his great success. Truett, however, placing one hand on the man's shoulder and pointing heavenward with the other, simply said, "How much do you have in that direction?" The man hung his head and confessed "I never thought of that."

If we think of that first, God provides our needs:

Matthew 6 33

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

But you know what, no matter how rich or poor we become, when it's time for us to leave this world, not only can't we take anything with us, but we don't even care about it. When we are dying we want to see the people we love!! Not our land, cars, watches or bank statements. Our dear ones, which will be staying here for another while, become the most valuable riches on earth. Don't wait! Make them your most valuable riches now!

Sister Mary Rose McGeady

“There is no greater joy nor greater reward than to make a fundamental difference in someone’s life”

And what about us, where are we going? God wants us to be with him but it is our decision. David had it clear when he wrote Psalm 23

Psalm 23 6b

**And I will dwell in the house of the Lord
Forever.**

Our God has provided a way for us to come home with Him in spite of our sins. You just need to confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus Christ is the son of God and that he came to earth to pay for your sins and that He has risen from the death. In His own words:

Romans 10:9

That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved

John 3 16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 5 24

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

John 11 25

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live”

John 20:31

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

Acts 16 31

So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

And how sure can we be that Jesus will not leave us once we are in His hands?

1 Cor. 6 14

And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power

Ephesians 2 8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

1 John 5 11

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son

Romans 8 38-39

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Sounds pretty sure to me!!

And what can we expect in heaven?

John 14 1-2

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Hebrews 11:10

For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God

Our Lord is preparing a mansion for you and that part is a surprise. But this same architect built the universe, so as our dear brother Bill Smiles, puts it:

“Papa no builds no trash”

The mansion is going to be great. However, as a Realtor, I know that the most important 3 aspects of a property are location, location and location so I'm going to answer some typical questions people ask before buying a home and at the same time explain a little about the neighborhood, the staff, amenities and involvement of our God our host.

The name of the development is New Jerusalem and is sitting in almost 2 million square miles of ground space; this is 1,400 miles by 1,400 miles. It's build of pure transparent gold. Not too shabby, no?

But is this a gated community?

Well yes, there is a 72 yard thick wall around it made of crystal clear jasper. This wall has 12 foundations adorned with precious stones, one is jasper, other sapphire, other emerald, etc. It has 12 gates, each made of one huge pearl and guarded by one angel. As a reminder, 2 angels destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

A more tranquil example:

Matthew 28 2-3

And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning and his clothing as white as snow.

Anyway, the inner city wall is 1,400 miles high (like 5,000 Sears towers high).

But what about illumination, doesn't the wall block the sun?

Rev 21 23

“The city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it”

Does the water come from well, desalination plant or what?

Rev 22 1

“A pure river of water of life, clear and crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb”

All homeowners will be by invitation only and will be given new bodies.

1 Cor. 15 51

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed

2 Corinthians 5 8

We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord

What about the CCR's?

Some warranties for the homeowner are: NO tears, NO death, NO mourning, NO crying, NO pain, etc.

Can we get that in writing? Sure:

Revelation 21 4

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away

And the conditions? Can I do it?

Philippians 4 13

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me

Colossians 3 1-2

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Philippians 3 13-14

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead

Philippians 1 21

For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain

And by the way, You cannot say “to die is gain” until you can say “to live is Christ”

So brothers, our inheritance is waiting for us.

The best is yet to come!!

As promised we will finish in Revelations:

Revelations 19 9

Then he said to me, “Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

Revelation 21 6-7

And he said to me, It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

Revelation 22 21

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Let's pray: I'm going to pray in first person, please follow me and make it your own.

Lord, I don't want to live one moment longer with doubt about whether or not I'll be in heaven. Thank You for sending Jesus to tell me the good news that You love me and You want to welcome me into Your eternal home. Instead of trusting in what I can do to get me into heaven, I trust in the way that You have provided through Jesus' death and resurrection. I trust You to forgive me and to lead me. I ask today that You would help me to see the problems and worries of this life in light of the hope of heaven. I trust that there will come a day when You will remove our suffering and when You will right every injustice and when You will multiply every joy. As I look forward to the promise of heaven, I'm deciding today to invest my life in eternity. I want to use the gifts and abilities that You have given me to do more than build a good life for myself and family in this world. I want to live for that which lasts. I pray In Jesus' name. Amen.

God Bless you!