

(6) “ENJOYING GOD IN YOUTH and HELPING YOUTH ENJOY GOD”

LOOKING FOR A CITY: WHAT DOES ETERNITY HOLD FOR ME?

Heb.11:8-10

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Most of us here today because we believe in God. Gen.1:1. Just a few years ago a young college man asked an audience: “May I tell you three reasons why I believe in God?” We wonder what response a young man in this modern world would give.
1. He said: (1) “BECAUSE OF THE THINGS I CAN SEE!” (2) “BECAUSE I RECEIVED A ‘LETTER’ FROM HIM”. [The whole Bible is a letter from God ... addressed to different ones but preserved for us so that we, too, might have faith - Jno.20:30-31.] (3) “BECAUSE I’VE TALKED WITH HIM. --- prayed for a sick father prior to an operation --- and I received the strength to face that ordeal and to see it through as I was tending him back to health!”
 2. Aren’t these three good reasons for believing in God? Because of things we can see; things we can read; and that we can talk to God in prayer! This young man was much wiser than many of his peers!
- B. THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN GOD ALSO BELIEVE IN A RELATIONSHIP SITUATION WITH GOD! That is, if I believe in God I also believe that I’m in a certain KINSHIP with, or in a certain LOCATION concerning, or in a PROXIMITY to God!! READ TEXT.

I. WHERE ARE YOU IN THE SIGHT OF GOD?

- A. We live in a world of uncertainties. BUT WE’VE LEARNED AND HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT THE GOD WHO RULES THE UNIVERSE IS COMPLETELY CONSISTENT AND CERTAIN IN ALL THAT HE’S REVEALED TO US!
1. The Bible portrays human life as being full of trouble and woe! Job 14:1- “Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble!” Job:5:6-7- “Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.” Job 34:15- “All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust!”
 2. New Testament writers describe our life as being transient and temporary in nature.
 - a) We’ve TASTED this life, haven’t we? It IS temporary! We WANT something that is SECURE!
 - b) When men come to the realization that this life was never intended to last, they will seek to make preparation for a better home which WILL LAST! 2 Cor.5:1-4
- B. THIS WORLD IS NOT OUR HOME! It is only temporary! It is running down and wearing out! THAT’S WHY we’re seeking those things above - Col.3:1-2, and why we’re “laying up treasures in heaven,” and why we’re looking beyond this life to that ETERNAL, HOME OF THE SOUL! Heb.1:10-12- “And, “Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands; 11 they will perish, but Thou remainest; and they all will become old as a garment, 12 and as a mantle Thou wilt roll them up; as a garment they will also be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years will not come to an end.”
1. We’re laying up treasures in heaven in preparation for our abode there!
 2. Like Peter points out in 2 Pet.3:13- “But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”
 3. WHY HEAVEN? Why THAT city? What does it mean to look for a city THERE? Heb.11:16- “But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.” Heb.11:10- “for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.” Heb.13:14- “For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.”
- C. With this in mind, then, JUST WHERE ARE WE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD?
1. Our faith in God necessitates that we’re SOMEWHERE -- the big question is WHERE?
 - a) One of the most sobering facts in the world is presented in the Bible in Acts.17:31.

- b) Some more light is shed on this great scene in the words of Jesus in **Matt.25:31-32**- “*But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 “And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats!”*”
2. As we look at some pertinent scriptures in this light, please try to perceive your exact location **IN THE SIGHT OF GOD!**
- a) Some here today are **STILL IN THE AGE OF INNOCENCE**, just as when they came into this life! **Matt.19:13; 18:3.**
- b) Others here have reached a time when they’ve become **ACCOUNTABLE**: and, though the time is not set at a specific age, consider these passages: **Rom.14:12; Jas.4:17; Mk.16:16.**
- c) After we become personally accountable to God, there’s just two ways we can go: **INTO CHRIST** or into **THE WORLD!**
- 1) Everyone in this audience today is in a state of INNOCENCE before God, or has reached the **AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY!**
- 2) If you’ve **reached the A.A.** >>> you’re either **IN CHRIST** or you’re **IN THE WORLD!**
- 3) There’s no other possible place for any of us to be: **IN CHRIST**, or **IN THE WORLD!**

II. PLEASE THINK WITH ME FOR JUST A MOMENT ABOUT THE WAY CHRIST HAS REVEALED TO US IN THE BIBLE: THAT GOD PROVIDES A CITY FOR HIS PEOPLE AS A DWELLING PLACE! Jno.14:6;

- A. This dwelling place is a **REAL** place: it’s HEAVEN!
1. I feel so sorry for those who cannot believe that HEAVEN is REAL, who believe that “*it’s only a state of mind;” or “just a fancied, mythical relationship!”*”
- a) And those who *believe in a RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD* also believe **WHAT GOD HAS SAID** about our life on earth being a preparing-ground for an eternal heavenly home!
- b) It has been a **primary thrust** of *modern theological thinking* and *godless humanism* to DENY and RIDICULE that **HOPE OF HEAVEN** which the faithful has!
2. **We believe in Heaven!** We believe that the righteous are going to inherit that heavenly abode! We believe it is real because **God tells us in the BIBLE that IT IS REAL!** Heaven is just as real as GOD IS REAL! Heaven is the Lord’s promise to His people! **Consider these verses:**
- Jno.6:30-32-** “*They said therefore to Him, “What then do You do for a sign, that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? 31 “Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘HE GAVE THEM BREAD OUT OF HEAVEN TO EAT.’” 32 Jesus therefore said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.”*”
- Matt.6:9-** “*Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.’”*
- Phil.3:20-** “*For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;”*”
- 1 Pet.1:3-4-** “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to OBTAIN AN INHERITANCE which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”*”
- B. God assures us that the REAL PLACE we know as HEAVEN is **REACHABLE** for us!
1. **It would be TERRIBLE to tell us** of some real place that was so desirable that we’d really want to go there -- **ONLY THEN to reveal that it’s impossible for us to reach it!** There ARE some real places that we’ll **likely never be able to reach.**
- a) **The MOON is real**, but I’ll never set foot on it. I’ll never reach it!

- b) Those **deep shelves in the ocean are REAL**, but we'll likely never reach them, either!
- c) There are some others places that are more imagination that fact that men have been longing after for hundreds of years, **but have never reached them yet!** That **Fountain of Youth**, which Ponce de Leon sought after so ambitiously. Or, James Hilton's **Shangrila**, in his 1933 novel "**Lost Horizon**"—the remote & beautiful **illusory** place where life approaches perfection, **utopia!**
2. But GOD doesn't call the perfect place He's prepared for His people "**Shangrila**," – **GOD CALLS HIS PLACE HEAVEN**, and He says we can have a home there!
- a) It's **REAL** and it's **REACHABLE!**
- b) If it weren't reachable some passages would be meaningless:
- 1 Pet.1:4-** "to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you."
- Matt.6:19-21-** "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
- Col.1:5-** "because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel,"
- 2 Tim.4:7-8-** "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."
- C. And this REAL, REACHABLE heaven is a **LASTING PLACE!** It will **REMAIN!**
1. As stated earlier, things of this life – this side of eternity – will perish! We have to **LOOK BEYOND** this life to SEE what remains!
2. So, that's what we're doing – we're looking BEYOND this life --- **FAR beyond ... to that home of the soul!**

And the last remaining pertinent question for our consideration is--

III. HOW DO WE GET FROM HERE [FROM THIS BUILDING IN VACAVILLE ON JULY 21, 1996] TO THAT HOME IN HEAVEN'S CITY WHICH GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THE FAITHFUL? Jno.14:3; Matt.25:34-

- "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' How can we be assured of this inheritance?"**
- A. Can't EARN it by works of law! God doesn't OWE it to us! But God is offering it by His GRACE!
- Gal.2:16-** "nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."
- B. But it DOES come by the obedience of faith! **Rom.16:25-26-** "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, (WHICH) has been made known to all the nations, **leading to obedience of faith!**" **Rom.6:17-18; 8:16-17.**
1. This is just a fulfillment of the great commission given by Jesus. **Mk.16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38.**
2. For us to obtain that salvation of Jesus Christ which He offered in the first century, we must **RECEIVE IT** in the same way they did then—by submitting to the righteousness of God. **Rom.10:1-3; Titus 3:4-7-** "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom

He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

- C. Continued obedience in a life of service to Christ, by serving one another, will see us successfully to that Home of the Soul, that Heavenly Abode, which the Lord has prepared for the faithful! **1 Pet.1:14-16**- *“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”*
1. Our faithfulness is established as we serve others in love. **Jno.13:34-35; Matt.25:31-46; Gal.6:2**
 2. And ALSO as we continue to love and honor and glorify the Lord by keeping His commandments! **Eph.3:21**- *“to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”* **Jno.17:4; 1 Jno.5:3.**
 - a) We praise & honor & glorify Him in activities of worship & work & commitment & allegiance!
 - b) The efforts we put forth are more meaningful that just what may appear on the surface to those who aren't in God's family! viz, Our song service is the fruit of our hearts and lips; Our prayers are the offerings of sweet smelling aromas to God, WHO already knows what we need before we ever ask Him; The Lord's Supper is a memorial of the most meaningful manifestation of love in human history.
 - c) **ILLUS.** Story about little blond, blue-eyed boy who drove sack of nails into a board. Disciplined. Got sick with a rapidly developing form of leukemia and died.
Parents very distraught, went on with life ... moved into town ... became very successful and finally elected to be district attorney. Decided to sell old home place in the country. Went out there with the realtor. Someone had picked up an old board full of rusty nails and leaned against the front porch. Realtor picked it up and when man saw it just burst into tears, pointing to the board. “What's wrong, it's just an old board full of nails?” But the man saw his little blond, blue-eyed boy, whom he had adored, AND MISSED, so very much!
People of world look at us as we partake of the LS and say, “It's only a piece of cracker and a little grape juice!” **But the Christian sees a loving God who came to earth in the bodily form of His Only Begotten Son to suffer and die, because our sins needed to be remitted. The Christian sees God's LOVE expressed in that sacrifice, and the Christian hears God's PROMISE that Jesus is coming again -- and proclaims it as true -- every time he partakes of the Lord's supper.**

CONCLUSION:

When we reach that heavenly city, the battles will be over, the victory will have been won! We will have moved into a place from which we will never move again! *It's a place that is **REAL**, that is **REACHABLE**, and one that will **REMAIN!** And it's a place where *we'll forever be **CLOSE TO GOD!****

Will you think real seriously for just a moment now about Almighty God and being close to HIM? I appeal to you to understand that you can initiate this closeness to God NOW, in this life. You can Be His child. You Don't Have to live in Sin. *But dear friend please understand, if you can't be persuaded to be a Christian, and to live close to God here on earth, then you won't go to heaven when you die!* This life is a time of preparation. Are you prepared to die? **You really don't have to be concerned about DYING, if you're LIVING close to God RIGHT NOW!** Where are you in the sight of God ----- NOW?