

Sharpen Your Faith

Week 26, Living with an Eternal Perspective

Paul T. Quelet, May 6, 2007

I. Eternity: On Everyone's Mind

A. Eternally speaking, what seems to be the goal of most major world religions?

- *They are trying to get people to the _____.*

Why is it that all people at the core think there must be life after death?
(Read Ecclesiastes 3:11)

- *Eternity gives us a reason to have _____. We have the hope of _____.*

B. Premise: We all strongly desire things that cannot be met through things of this world.

- Possible responses:
 1. Blame the _____ meeting desires.
 2. Some people become disillusioned and _____.
 3. The other alternative considers earthly things as shadows, hints, and echoes of the _____ things to come.

II. Preparation for Eternity (Read Luke 12:39-40, see vv. 35-40)

How does the nearness of Jesus' return affect how we dedicate our lives to God?

- *The nearness of the second coming of Jesus compels us to live _____.*

"It ought to be the business of everyday to prepare for our final day."—
Matthew Henry

III. Eternity's Urgency (Read Philippians 3:18-21)

- God's hesitancy in coming is not His _____ but His _____.
- In salvation, _____ life begins the moment we accept Christ.

IV. Victory in Eternity (Read John 19:30)

What is the significance of the statement Jesus makes: 'It is finished.'?

- *Jesus _____ His mission on earth.*
- *Jesus paid for all sins for all time and was _____.*

VI. Time Toward Eternity (Read Psalm 39:4-5)

"My journey today will bring me closer to home; it may be just around the bend."—John Eldredge¹

V. Eternal Rewards

A. What kinds of things do we know about the rewards we will receive in heaven? (Read Matthew 6:19-21 also see John 12:24-26)

- *There are only two things from this world that last forever: The _____ of God and the souls of _____.* (see 1 Peter 1:24-25)

B. Degrees of reward in eternity (See 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, Matthew 25:21, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Revelation 20:11-12.)

- The ones who are going to enjoy heaven the most are the ones who _____ in godliness here in this world.

"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."—Jim Elliot

¹ John Eldredge, *The Sacred Romance*.

"If for all practical purposes we believe that this life is our best shot at happiness, if this is as good as it gets, we will live as despairing men and women. We will place on this world a burden it was never meant to bear."—
John Eldredge²

VI. What will Heaven be like? (see 1 Corinthians 2:7-9, Revelation 21:3-7)

A. Heavenly Imagery

"All the scriptural imagery (harps, crowns, gold, etc.) is, of course, a merely symbolic attempt to express the inexpressible. Musical instruments are mentioned because for many people (not all) music is the thing known in the present life which most strongly suggests ecstasy and infinity. Crowns are mentioned to suggest the fact that those who are united with God in eternity share His splendor and power and joy. Gold is mentioned to suggest the timelessness of it. People who take these symbols literally might as well think that when Christ told us to be like doves, He meant that we were to lay eggs."—C.S. Lewis³

B. Heaven is physical

- See Romans 8:19-21 (creation redeemed), 1 Corinthians 15:42-43 (bodily existence), Romans 8:23 (bodily redemption), and Revelation 21:1 (new earth).
- Heaven is not an _____ place in the clouds.
- One of the biggest ways for the devil to discourage us from following God is to trick us into thinking that heaven will be _____!

C. If there is no sex in heaven (see Matthew 22:29-31), how is there great happiness?

- "It is like chocolate."⁴

D. Our tasks in heaven (See Revelation 21:1-7)

- The Bible goes from a _____ (Genesis 1) to a _____ (Revelation 22).

² John Eldredge, *The Sacred Romance*.

³ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, pg. 137.

⁴ This example follows from C.S. Lewis, *Miracles*, Chapter 16.

"[In heaven] we will be free to be the true selves God designed us to be."
Peter Kreeft

VII. Closing Exhortation: Eternal Significance (Read 1 Corinthians 15:58)

VIII. Ending Story:

"*Desiderio Domini*." (Latin for: "I dearly long _____.")

Bottom Line: We must understand heaven as our destination. Living in light of eternity prompts us to live this life with the greatest significance possible.

Memory Verse: "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 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."—John 14:2-3 (NIV)

Suggested Resources:

1 Corinthians 15, 2 Corinthians 4, 1 Thessalonians 4-5, Revelation 21

Heaven, Randy Alcorn

The Sacred Romance, John Eldredge and Brent Curtis

Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis

The Problem of Pain, C.S. Lewis