Sermon April-10 2022 **Heaven and Hell**.

When we were young, we used this sentence many times:

“You can go to hell” and I’m sure many of you have heard it or even used it yourself.

Yet, I’ve never heard this expression:

“You can go to heaven man”

How would you explain to someone heaven or hell?

I’m sure there will be 50+ different answers.

What happens when your current life is over?

Where will you go. Heaven or hell, both staircases are open. Choose. It’s a very important question.

Most if **NOT** all, would say, I want to go to heaven.

Let’s assume a Billionaire offers the first 10,000 people a million Dollars each to join our church to go to heaven.

How many people would be here today? Yes, all 10,000

For the joy that was set before each one, all will come.

There are well over 50 books about heaven & hell.

Which one is telling the truth? Does the Bible tell us?

**2 Cor 5:9 We would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord.**

Why would Apostle Paul say this?

There are two fixed points for human beings:

**birth & death**.

Death spares no one, and many never think about it.

Jesus referred to Hell many times. The Biblical understanding of Hell is fundamental to all humans.

Jesus said:

**Matt 13:49-50** **So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out, separate the evil people from the righteous, and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

*Luke 16* Jesus told us about father Abraham and Lazarus the poor man who died and went to heaven, also a rich man died who ended up in hell.

The rich man talked to father Abraham. ***I need water***.

**Q:-** What kind of bodies did they have, because they recognized each other in heaven?

What does this mean? Will we as humans have bodies that will be recognized just as the rich man did, or was it just a Parable of Jesus?

Everybody seems to have their own idea about how “Heaven or Hell”.

The Bible teaches us about life after death in words of divine revelation.

The death rate is 100%. I think more than 90% of people will say, I’m a good person, I don’t kill or rob banks, therefore I’ll go to heaven automatically.

**Matt 18:8-9 If your righthand or eye causes you to sin, cut it out . . . . . it is better for you to enter life without a hand or an eye then to be thrown into the hellfire.**

I fail here. Most people don’t even discuss or think about death. The Bible is God’s love-letter, plus our travel brochure to the next life, and most people ignore it.

People claim that Hell is only for those who are really bad criminals, therefore they will for sure go to heaven.

They think Heaven is an automatic position, and most people do not realize they need forgiveness to enter heaven.

There are many unanswered questions about our afterlife. Many people get upset when you talk about “hell-fire and brimstone”. They say how can a loving God be so cruel to send human beings to a “hell-fire” forever? It’s a mystery.

Some people will turn away from Christianity when you scare them with Hellfire, yet Hell is eternal and there is NO opportunity for redemption.

Do you think Jesus used Hell to frighten people to repentant and stop sinning? I know for sure Jesus did.

**Matt 10:28** **Don’t be afraid of people. They can kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul. The only one you should fear is God, the one who can send the body and the soul to be destroyed in hell.**

God is a jealous God; He is jealous for His glory.

Our loving God is bringing honor to His Name.

The reason for Jesus on the cross, is what sin deserves.

**DEATH. . . . We need a Savior**.

David wrote in:

**Psl 23:3** **He leads me in the path of righteousness for His Name sake.**

This Psalm should leave us speechless. WHY?

Because the Son of God on the cross is the object of our Fathers’ love for us. (*for His Name sake***)**

**Rev 20:15** **If anyone’s name was *NOT* found written in the Book of Life will be thrown into the lake of fire**.

 This is frightening.

My question is: when believers pass onto the next life, and the body returns to dust, does the soul go to heaven instantly, or does the soul just go into a deep sleep for a while somewhere then reincarnate into a different form or different body as some religions believe?

Let’s look at a few references in Scripture:

In 1 Samuel 28, King Saul goes to a women (a medium) The woman ask Saul, “*Saul,* ***whose spirit*** *do you want me to call up?” King Saul replied*: *“****Call up Samuel****,”*

But Samuel has been in his grave a very long time.

Was Samuel just sleeping, and yet he could speak?1 Sam 28

Jesus told us that the rich man recognized father Abraham in heaven and that the rich man was very thirsty and is suffering there in hell.

This rich man asked if Lazarus could go down and warn his brothers who are still on earth in physical bodies?

Let’s look at another example:

Moses died on a mountain; Elijah was taken into heaven.

Centuries later, Jesus goes up on the Mount of Configuration, and both Moses and Elijah appear in bodies that Peter recognized.

It’s amazing to read all these things in Scripture.

Q: Will we recognize our loved ones in heaven or hell?

Where are they at this moment?

In 1 Peter 3 we read: *When Jesus was raised from the grave, He went and preached to the* ***SPIRITS*** *in prison,those who disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was building the Ark.*

**John** *wrote in:*

***Rev 6*** *When the Lamb of God broke the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the* ***SOULS*** *of all who had been martyred for the word of God and for being faithful in their testimony. (***Souls are kept somewhere***)*

Paul says our bodies will be changed into glorified bodies just like Jesus’ body. The nail marks were still visible, Jesus ate with His Disciples, but what about the non-believers like the rich man who is getting tormented in Hell? Or the ***SPIRITS*** *in prison* -souls. Does this make sense?

John wrote about those in hell:

**Rev 14:11** **The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day, or night.**

 That’s Frightening

Both Jesus’ words in **Matthew** and **John’s** words in Rev describe horrifying events of what will & can happen.

What kind of bodies did they have? If it is a spiritual body, then how can a spiritual body burn? ***So many questions***.

It seems there are various interpretations of life after death

I ask again: Is it wise to scare non-believers or family with words of Hell-fire and Brimstone?

**Matt 25:46** (Jesus words) **And these will go into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.**

It is an evil deed to turn ones back against God. I myself are overwhelmed with this terror of eternal hell-fire.

On the other hand, believers will see Jesus as He is with **GREAT JOY**, the greatest moment in human history.

Jesus is the only one who went to heaven and came back to tell us what we will experience.

They saw the marks in His hands in His glorified body.

What kind of body will we have when we see and hear each other in our next life?

Paul says: “**It’s better to be with the Lord, than to stay alive in this physical body**”

Jesus described “Hell” numerous times and yet, many people are not really concerned about Hell, because a life without God is better for some people.

Hell is the last thing on the average person’s mind.

Many people imagine that Heaven and Hell are subject to their own understanding. (***As you think so it will be***)

My question today: Do I deserve **heaven** or **hell**?

Did Jesus warn us.

Jesus said:

**Matt 5:22** **Whoever is angry or insults his brother, will be liable to Hellfire.**

*I know I fail completely with this warning.* ***I need a Savior****.*

Should we use this subject of hell and tell people they will NOT enter heaven when they keep on sinning.

 Jesus did:

**Matt 23:33** **You Hippocrates, how are you going to escape being sentenced to hell.**

I want to go to heaven. In heaven there is ~~($1m)~~ no, sorry, no more sin, no more pain/sickness, no poverty or death. ***Hallelujah - O’ death where is your sting?***

Jesus said to the thief on the cross next to Him:

**Luk 23:43 Today you will be with Me in paradise**.

Not tomorrow, but today.

Does that mean that when a Christian dies, they enter paradise immediately? Again 100 different answers.

For believers, death is not a punishment, and it cannot be related to our sins.

After death, our bodies turn to dust, but not our souls.

In **Romans 1** Paul wrote that ***there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.***

Currently, the soul functions in and through this physical body, but what happens to the soul after death?

No one knows what happens to our souls – No, not ONE.

Paul wrote:

**2 Cor 5:9 We are of good courage, we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.**

Does the soul need a body to speak or to see or to taste?

Who knows the answer? All I can say is that death has not broken our Spiritual bond between us and Christ Jesus.

(but it’s NOT yet our final stage, there is still the **White Throne Judgement** to come after the 1000 yr Millennium.

Attention: This physical world today is our training ground.

We must grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ - TODAY.

BUT HOW? Jesus said:

**Matt 10:42 Whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of water . . . he will by no means lose his reward.**

 (to Serve, to encourage to uplift others)

**1 Peter 4:10 Be good servants and use whatever gift God has given you in a way that will best serve each other.**

After death, is it possible for the soul to think and feel “outside” this physical body?

**Q:-** Can our loved ones see or hear us now at this very moment? Who knows? So many unanswered questions.

The Bible says that every human being must appear before the Sovereign God in the final resurrection and every single thought, every intent every action, every failure will be examined. With that, **each one will receive a reward** according to God’s judgement.

 Today and tomorrow is all training time for us.

The Bible does **NOT** teach about an intermediate state between our death and Christs return, the question is if Lazarus and the rich man could talk and the rich man felt thirsty, then one should ask; does the spirit get thirsty or does it have a tongue to speak like Samuel? Who knows?

On the Mount of Configuration, how could Moses and Elijah appear and be recognized by Peter together with Jesus. So many unanswered questions.

Can we say that believers know of their eternal spiritual status after death? (YES. **For the JOY set before us)**

I know our earthly bodies wear out at death then we enter Paradise and when we enter there we will shout out:

“**This is by far better than to be in a physical body**”

The warning in Scripture is that Heaven is **NOT** an automatic destination it is only by our FAITH in Jesus and serving others – not tomorrow, but today.

Jesus warned us:

**Luk 12:3** **Whatever was said in the dark, shall be heard in the light and whatever you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the rooftops.**

No one will be excluded, including you and me, for God shows no partiality. **No one is righteous, no, not one**.

*I said many wrong things this week.* ***So, I fail completely.***

 Thanks for the blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross.

**Matt 12:36** **I tell you that on the day of judgment people will have to account for every careless word they speak.**

***I fail boots and all again.*** ***I need a Savior.***

Some believers feel intimidated that their secret sins will be made known, but this judgement will highlight God’s righteous acts and His Glory. . . **For His Name sake**.

This judgment of believers is a judgment unto rewards for what we have done while in this physical body = training.

God’s judgement is when He hands out rewards.

We need to be involved in the Master’s business= TODAY.

 Why???

Jesus was motivated by the rewards set before Him:

**Heb 12:3** **For the joy that was set before Him, (Jesus) He endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the righthand of the throne of God.**

Hollywood portrays Heaven as brilliant white, and people are floating on clouds, but how do you think it looks like? ***Think for a moment***.

Jesus said:

**Matt 5:5** **Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth**. (which earth and where?)

Is heaven a real place, because Jesus did physically travel from one physical place to another place. ***It’s a mystery***.

Jesus said “*You shall know the TRUTH and the TRUTH shall make you FREE. In My Father’s house are many mansions*” That means Jesus is preparing a location for many inhabitants somewhere. But where?

Is that the new heaven and the new earth? Who knows?

Here comes Paul and he writes:

**Rom 8:21 The creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.**

But when is this? Jesus stepped out of the tomb with a glorified body, it was His own body, people recognized Him, because His old body was not left in the grave.

This makes me think it could be the same with this earth that everything will be set free from bondage and corruption and the boundaries between heaven and earth will be removed, then we will dwell before the Throne of Grace in our glorified bodies in a stunning place.

The “New Jerusalem” also sounds like a glorified physical place: We read in ***Rev 21 The righteous nations of the earth will bring glory into this New-City*.** Which city?

Jesus brought salvation and redemption down to earth, He did not **JUST** purchase and saved our souls, He will also redeem the earth & our bodies. We will **walk with Him**, **talk with Him** and **will see Him face to face**. The whole creation will be set free from the result of the curse on Adam and Eve. How wonderful.

*Let’s all say this out very lowed*. . . JOY.

JOY **(For the joy) - (set before me) - (I WILL ENDURE)**

As we worship God today, remember it’s one of the greatest privileges that has been given to us as human beings **to enjoy**, no animal can worship a loving God.

Our souls will be re-united with our bodies, and will be recognizable the same as Jesus’. We will come back into our same body just like Jesus with hands and feet, but NOT subject to dishonor, but with glorious bodies.

We were created to accurately reflect the perfections of God’s nature “In His image”. We will still have a body but a Spiritual body that will co-operate with the desires of the Holy Spirit & NOT of the flesh. A body fearfully and wonderfully made that we long to glorify God forever and ever. ***What a joy that is set before us. (I want to endure)***

We will not get married, but this same glorified body will go on for eternity just like Jesus’s body.

***Say:- My name is written in the Lambs Book of Life.***

**= *That is the joy that is set before us*.**

All human beings crave for happiness, we can’t live without it: Joy is a serious business in heaven. We cannot be happy in God’s presence without praising Him.

Paul said it is far better to depart to be with Christ.

We were created for a relationship with Jesus and to find pleasure in worshipping Him just like the people who went before Jesus when He entered Jerusalem -*Palm-Sunday*.

**Rev 7:9-10 A great multitude with palm branches in their hands and crying with a loud voice, Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne.**

*We will see His face and be part of a political system and reign with Jesus the Messiah, a ONE RULE governance*.

Satan is seeking to continue his destruction of humanity that he started with Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden, but Satan will not succeed this time. We are victorious.  **That is the JOY that is set before us!!!!**

*Let me ask: please listen . . . .*

Did you use your talent that you’ve received from God by serving or encouraging or forgiving a person this week?

 2 Tim 2 *If we endure, we will also reign with Him.*

How can we reign without being trained?

*Nothing of importance is lost to the believer in death.*

***That’s the JOY that is set before us!!!!***

Our current life on this earth relates to the life to come, we will not be playing harps while we float on clouds.

This life is training ground for the future life to come.

We will marvel at the LOVE and the GRACE of God.

Jesus and Paul stressed this: ***Love one another***.

Again, **I fail boots and all**, but I do strive to love all and put my trust in Jesus and live by faith, because we read in:

**Rev:20:6** **They will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him a thousand years**.

Is heaven or hell real? We know so little about heaven and hell, but by studying the Bible (Not the 40 books) we read what Paul said in this very important verse:

***For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross***. Jesus came to offer grace to us as sinners.

**Grace to set sinners free**, **that’s the joy that is set before you and me today**.

This gives me strength to endure until the bitter end.

We should pray fervently for salvation for the people who are lost and boldly encourage them regarding heaven and hell and the LOVE and JOY that God has for those who love Him and to build a relationship with Jesus our Savior.

***That’s the joy that is set before you and me today.***

Let us praise HIM.

Amen.