

FROM THE GARDEN TO THE CITY #3

PURSUE RELATIONALLY

To kick things off, go around the circle and ask your group to answer the following question:

What's one thing you look forward to in Heaven?

LIVE AUTHENTICALLY

Welcome to the last week in our series, From the Garden to the City. In this series, it is our goal to make every moment of our lives matter. None of us know when we will draw our last breath and many of us spend much of our life wondering: "What is my purpose in life?" In this series, it is our goal to help you better understand God's Greater Story, why it matters, and what your purpose is within that story.

How did you feed your soul this week?

COUNSEL BIBLICALLY

This week Pastor Mike taught us about the hope of God's greater story, in a place the Bible calls heaven. The problem is, many Christians don't stop to think about heaven, or if they do think about it, they have no idea what the Bible actually says about heaven. So culture shapes our idea of heaven into a picture that is uninspired and unattractive.

LIFEWAY
LIFE





As a result, we focus on filling our time here on earth with all the things that make us happy. We make every moment about us, squeezing as much into our time here on earth as possible. What ends up happening, is we become so earthly-minded that we're no heavenly good. We never tell people about this hope we have, and we never fulfill the purpose Jesus called us to live out. But if we can understand how beautiful and amazing heaven will be, and live with it in mind, then we will begin to fulfill our purpose of crowding heaven. That is how you make every moment of your one life matter for eternity!

Romans 8:19-23

Paul writes in Romans that as believers the Holy Spirit is a foretaste for future glory. What is this future glory Paul is talking about? Future glory is not just heaven. Verse 23 states future glory includes our full rights as God's adopted children and new bodies. The holy spirit, the power of God at work inside us to overcome sin, worship God, obey his commands, the very power that helped us move from darkness to light is himself the confidence we need to be able to hope for what is to come, which is heaven. Paul indicates that all creation, including believers indwelt by the holy spirit, are longing to be released from sin and suffering and to one day dwell in Heaven with God.

Before this week's sermon, did you find yourself longing for heaven? Why or why not?

Take some time as a group describing what heaven was like prior to the sermon, and describe what you understand heaven to be like after the sermon.



Paul seems to indicate that longing to be released from current suffering and sin is a character trait of believers, this isn't what some Christians do and some don't. Rather Paul expresses a longing for heaven should be happening in all believers everywhere.

If you find the majority of the group doesn't long for heaven, doesn't long to be released from sin and suffering to dwell with God for eternity, then spend some time going over the gospel, because the gospel is the core doctrine to possessing this character trait. It's the very doctrine Paul is trying to get the Roman church to understand in this letter.

Read Romans 3:21-26.

Why did Jesus come? Why did he die? Why did He rise from the dead? Why was Jesus so significant?

Jesus came because this world is not your home. Something better is coming and Jesus had to come, die in your place, free you from the slavery of sin, and rise from the dead so the Holy Spirit could dwell in you, becoming your confidence that there really is a home for you after this life is done, that you should be longing for.

Revelation 21:1-7; Revelation 21:10-27

Revelation is full of apocalyptic literature, meaning much of the imagery is not meant to be taken literally. The Apostle John couldn't even describe the beauty that God was allowing him to see, and so to describe it, he used common elements to explain the things he was witnessing what he's seeing with his own eyes. What he saw was so amazing and so beautiful that he used the beautiful things of the earth to describe the best he could what the new heaven and new earth would be like.



There's a couple notes that stand out. There's a great mountain, there are precious stones everywhere, the new Jerusalem is called, The City. The city has a wall, the gates are open, angels walk with you, there's no temple in the city, nations will walk together, kings of the world will enter the city, no evil will ever be there.

What stands out to you about the city the most? Why?

How many people on earth do you want to experience the city?

Jesus commands us, then go make disciples of all the nations, baptize them and teach them to obey all the commands I have given you, and be sure of this with you to the end of the age. In light of eternity and heaven you have one response, go share the gospel with everyone so they can experience the city just like you will.

Is there anything holding you back from desiring to be in the City? Is there any part of you that holds you back from inviting others to join you in the City one day? It is our hope that through this week's sermon and through this week's Lifeway Lite, that you now have a better understanding of Heaven than you did before. It is only through a deeper understanding of Heaven that we will have any desire to be there ourselves, let alone invite others there.

This week, focus your time with the Lord, devote time to better understanding Heaven. Commit to reading through Revelation chapters 21 and 22 during your time with the Lord this week. Learn to better understand what scripture actually teaches us about the City. Ask someone in your group to hold you accountable to better your understanding of Heaven this week in the hope that you might be able to confidently invite others to join you in the City one day.



Pray:

As a group, spend some time in prayer asking God to help each of you surrender to God's greater story. Ask God to help you understand more about eternity, what the City will actually be like, and ask God to give you a longing to be there and to invite others to join you there one day.

Memorize:

"But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior."

Philippians 3:20 NLT