

Heaven

The Ultimate Homecoming

Sunday, June 5, 2011

Pastor Warner Smith

Message Truth:

Every year FBCE has a Homecoming. The purpose of Homecoming Sunday is to give individuals who were saved in this church an opportunity to come back home (where they first knew Christ) and reacquaint themselves with their first faith family. Were everyone to return every year they would find some number of individuals absent because they have died. In heaven, every Christian will experience the ultimate homecoming where no one will be absent. Heaven is the ultimate abode of the redeemed with God. Heaven in its full and final state is future. The life of the redeemed in heaven will be like God originally intended human life to be before man chose to rebel against God. Before we can delve into the particulars of heaven, however, we must first understand the overarching redemption story told throughout the Bible. Today we will turn our attention to these basic truths which will better prepare us to understand what the Bible teaches us about heaven.

⁸ Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. ¹² **For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know**

fully, even as I have been fully known.

1 Corinthians 13:8–12 (ESV)

There are huge limitations to what we can know while considering heaven.

The focus of this series of sermons will be on what God has revealed in His Word!

⁹ However, as it is written: **“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”** 1 Corinthians 2:9

Before we can understand heaven...

1. We must first understand the i_____ of the fall of man.

● **God created the Garden of Eden to be where h_____ lived in fellowship with Him.**

Because God gave them free will, Adam and Eve chose not to obey Him and chose to sin. When sin entered this world, it brought with it a curse.

The fall of man impacts:

- Our r_____ with one another
- N_____ and the planet
- All p_____ on the planet
- Our relationship with G_____
- Our b_____

● **The c_____ effected all of God's c_____.**

● **In heaven, the c_____ is ended.**

³ **There will no longer be any curse;** and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; Revelation 22:3 (NASB)

● **Heaven is a r_____m_____ earth, life as it was o_____ meant to be.**

● **Heaven will be the p_____ earth for which we were c_____.**

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." ⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." ⁶ Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost." ⁷ "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

Revelation 21:1–7 (NASB)

2. There are some important distinctions between p_____ and h_____.

● **H_____ is not where you and I go when we die.**

○ Sheol is divided into two parts:

H_____ and P_____.

● **Paradise is no longer a part of Sheol. It was r_____ to heaven at Jesus' resurrection.**

⁹ (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that **he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth?**

Ephesians 4:9 (ESV)

⁸ Therefore it says, "**When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,** and he gave gifts to men." ⁹ (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Ephesians 4:8–10 (ESV)

³ And I know that **this man was caught up into paradise** — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows — ⁴ and **he heard things that cannot be told,** which man may not utter. 2 Corinthians 12:3–4 (ESV)

With Jesus Christ's work complete, the believers who had been confined to Sheol were taken to heaven, where they wait in God's presence until the time of their resurrection to enter His Kingdom on Earth.

What happens when a Christian dies?

Since Jesus' resurrection, at death all believers go to paradise in heaven to await the time of their ultimate bodily resurrection in which they will receive bodies like Jesus' resurrected body.