

Adult Bible Discovery- October 18, 2020

For Starters:

There are some who argue it's possible to be so "heavenly minded" that one is no earthly good.

There are others, such as the author C.S. Lewis who insist those who think most about the next world to come end up doing the most in this world.

Which view do you think is right?

What are your own habits and attitudes regarding heaven?

When the Apostle Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, it forever revolutionized his life. Up to that point he had been a strict follower of the Jewish law and zealous to honor all the Jewish customs, but his encounter with Christ completely transformed his understanding of salvation and infused him with new purpose (See Acts 22:3-21). Paul's driving passion was now, as he relates in this next section of his letter, to press on toward the goal to which God has called him: to know Christ and make him known to the world. Paul recognized that his time on this earth was short, and he had to use the moments God had given him to prepare for eternity.

Read Philippians 3:12-21

- How does Paul describe his own spiritual journey with Christ? What is his primary aim?
- Why is it important to "forget what is behind"?
- Why is living in the past a difficult thing to do?
- How can fixating on the future cause distractions in the present?
- How is Paul an example to others? Who are examples of faith for you?
- Paul was both grieved to see people dying without Christ yet filled with joy when thinking of the world to come. How have you experienced both grief and joy at the same time in your life?

From Max Lucado's Book, *The Applause of Heaven*:

"When I was a young man, I had plenty of people to wipe away my tears. I had two big sisters who put me under their wings. I had a dozen or so aunts and uncles. I had a mother who worked nights as a nurse and days as a mother—exercising both professions with tenderness. I even had a brother three years my elder who felt sorry for me occasionally."

"But when I think about someone wiping away my tears, I think about Dad. His hands were callused and tough, his fingers short and stubby. And when my father wiped away a tear, he seemed to wipe it away forever. There was something in his touch that took away more than the drop of hurt from my cheek. It also took away my fear."

"John says that someday God will wipe away your tears. The same hands that stretched the heavens will touch your cheeks. The same hands that formed the mountains will caress your face. The same hands that curled in agony as the Roman spike cut through will someday cup your face and brush away your tears...Forever!"

"When you think of world where there will be no reason to cry, ever, doesn't it make you want to go home?"

"John declares, 'There will be no more death...' (Revelation 21:4). Can you imagine it? A world with no hearses or morgues or cemeteries or tombstones? Can you imagine a world with no spades full of dirt thrown on caskets? No names chiseled into marble? No funerals? No black dresses? No black wreaths?"

"If one of the joys of the ministry is a bride descending the church aisle, one of the griefs is a body encased in a shiny box in front of the altar. It's never easy to say goodbye. It's never easy to walk away. The hardest task in this world is to place a final kiss on lips that cannot kiss in return. The hardest thing in this world is to say goodbye. In the next world, John says, 'goodbye' will never be spoken."

- What are those things that cause you to shed tears today?
- How can an eternal perspective make a difference in your daily life?
- What is all that is wrapped up the "prize" that Paul alludes to in verse 14?
- How does the knowledge that you are a citizen of heaven change your daily perspective?

Contemporary Christian artist Chris Tomlin in his song *Home* shares this eternal perspective. You can watch the video by following this link- <https://youtu.be/YIb4NC5ikYo>

*This world is not what it was meant to be
All this pain, all this suffering
There's a better place
Waiting for me*

*In Heaven
Every tear will be wiped away
Every sorrow and sin erased
We'll dance on seas of amazing grace
In Heaven, In Heaven*

*I'm goin' home
Where the streets are golden
Every chain is broken
Oh I wanna go, Oh I wanna go*

*Home
Where every fear is gone
I'm in your open arms
Where I belong*

*Home
Lay down my burdens,
I lay down my past
I run to Jesus, no turning back
Thank God Almighty,
I'll be free at last
In Heaven, In Heaven*

*Blinded eyes
Will finally see
The dead will rise
On the shores of eternity
The trump will sound
The angels will sing
Hallelujah, Hallelujah*

What a great picture of our heavenly, eternal home that we possess now by faith and one day we will experience by sight. Until that day, we press on!

Prayer: *Lord, thank you for the hope of heaven. Thank you for the promise that one day you will make everything right and all things new. Help us to become more and more convinced of this truth, with the result that we live with ever-increasing passion to share this amazing news with everyone. Amen.*