

Heaven is Home

I've lived a fairly long life – 68 years now. To most people I'm "old," and I'm fond of saying when asked how I'm doing "pretty good for an old man." However, that falls flat when I'm with our seniors at church, or at a luncheon with other pastors and retired pastors, and there are many who are 5, 10, 15, or 20 years older than me.

But the longer I live, the more I remember: "I'm not home yet." Especially in these days of so much turmoil, socially, politically, morally, and even religiously, life is hard to bear some days. The shooting last year at the Texas church brought that home once again. I have cried looking at pictures of the children shot down deliberately in cold blood by a man filled with evil.

The political division, the "me first" mentality, self-identifying, sexual exploitation of children, world hunger, rampant racism, abortion – not only accepted but glorified by so many – cause a heaviness and a sorrow that will never be gone here on earth. We're reminded that:

1. Perfect healing will not take place in this life, but in the world to come.

2. Perfect justice will not take place in this life, but in the world to come.

This means, of course, that we will suffer angst, pain, anxiety, and grief all throughout our lives. Though Jesus is King, though His peace is real, His grace is sufficient, and His power available, things will never be perfect down here.

Some people are recognized for their greatness in this life, while God honors others in the life to come. Henry C. Morrison was a faithful missionary who served the Lord in Africa for over 40 years. He recalls that emotional day when he and his

wife boarded a ship on their way back to the United States. His mind flooded with memories of the wonderful experiences they had enjoyed on the mission field. He began wondering what it would be like to return to his Midwestern hometown – will anyone there still remember us? Aboard that same ship, that day with Henry and his wife was the former President of the United States, Teddy Roosevelt. He was returning from a big game hunting trip in Africa. When the ship pulled into the New York harbor, there were thousands of people there to greet him. The crowds cheered and the bands played. There were signs, banners, and billboards everywhere saying, “Welcome Home!”

As the dear missionary and his wife left the ship, they saw that no one had come to welcome them back home. With a heavy heart, Henry Morrison went to his hotel room and told his wife, “Honey, for 40 years we poured our lives into ministry and service. And yet we come back to America and not a single soul comes to welcome us home!”

His wife came and sat down next to her husband. She put her hand on his shoulder, and said to him, “Henry, you have forgotten something. You’re not home yet!”

Do you ever feel like the things you do for Christ are overlooked? Maybe you spend long hours working with children each day, or you work a mundane office job. Never forget that this world is not your home. Serve your Savior faithfully each day, and He will reward you for your labors – just keep in mind, you’re not home yet.

Earthly crowns are dross to him who looks for a Heavenly one.

– Jane Porter[1. Excerpt from a devotional by Dr. James A. Scudder.]

Here’s just a little of what awaits us!

The Absence of all that's bad (Revelation 21)

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." There isn't a more comforting verse in all of Scripture!

The Presence of all that's good

There's a joke about two guys who speculate whether there will be baseball played in Heaven. One says "I'll pray and ask God tonight since you want to know so badly." The next day, he tells his friend. "Well, I prayed about whether there would be baseball in Heaven, and God answered me. I've got good news and bad news." "Tell me," says his friend. "The good news is that, yes, there will be baseball in Heaven. The bad news is that you're the starting pitcher tomorrow!"

The Glory of God in Jesus (Revelation 22:3b-5)

His servants will serve Him. We will see His face, shine in His glory, and sit with Him as Kings.

Eternal

"And they will reign forever and ever" with Him.

Home

"In my Father's house are many dwelling places (mansions)...I am going away to prepare a place for you." John 14:2 CBS

Building 429 sang "This Is Not Where I Belong"

*...all I know is I'm not home yet
This is not where I belong
Take this world and give me Jesus
This is not where I belong*

So when the walls come falling down on me

*And when I'm lost in the current
Of a raging sea
I have this blessed assurance, holding me*

*All I know is I'm not home yet
This is not where I belong
Take this world and give me Jesus
This is not where I belong*

B.J. Thomas wrote the song "Home Where I Belong"

*They say that heaven's pretty,
And living here is too.
But if they said that I would have to choose between the two.*

*I'd go home,
Going home,
Where I belong.
While I'm here I'll serve him gladly,
And sing him all my songs.*

*I'm here,
But not for long.
And when I'm feeling lonely,
And when I'm feeling blue.
It's such a joy to know that I am only passing through.*

*I'm headed home,
Going home,
Where I belong.
And one day I'll be sleeping,
When death knocks on my door.
And I'll awake and find that I'm not homesick anymore.*

*I'll be home,
Going home,
Where I belong.*

To conclude, I've asked my son Phillip to write a little something about C.S. Lewis' description of Narnia's version of Heaven in "The Last Battle."



I am hard pressed to find a better depiction of Heaven in any work of fiction than what C.S. Lewis wrote in the final book of "The Chronicles of Narnia." The last few chapters of "The Last Battle" are full-to-bursting with the beauty, grandeur, and awesomeness that awaits those who believe. Food tastes better. The world is familiar yet deeper, richer, and better in every way imaginable. There are sweet moments of reunion with those who have gone before, as seen when King Tirian is reunited with his father. Yet nothing captures that pull we feel when we think of our heavenly home, that sense of longing – better than these words by one of the characters in those final pages: "I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now." Heaven is the place we "have been looking for" all our lives. Heaven is home, our "real country." Heaven is where we belong. What an amazing hope we have as believers!

**This life is just the preface. The real story starts
when we're home!**