**Enter the Gates of Heaven**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**1 Peter 1:3-5**

**Sunday Morning**

**August 26, 2018**

**1 Peter 1:3-5**

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you…

**Most people don’t think much about heaven unless they are facing death**

In fact, few Christians give serious thought to their eternal home, and therefore, have no convictions about heaven. Furthermore, Saints, they may not know what the Bible says regarding heaven and can’t even remember hearing a sermon about it. This results in confusion and an unbiblical understanding of what awaits believers after this life.

Although God has not revealed everything about heaven to us, Scripture provides insights that motivate us to live for our eternal destiny rather than this earthly existence.

**Our heavenly Father is there**

In the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew chapters 5-7, Jesus often spoke about His Father

**“who is in heaven”**

Instead of speculating on where heaven is, we can simply say that it’s wherever God is.

**Matthew 5:16**

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven”

**Our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is there**

When Jesus ascended into the clouds in Acts 1:11, two angels told the disciples,

**Acts 1:10-11**

10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

**Colossians 3:1-4**

1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

**Romans 8:34**

“Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us”

**Heaven is a Prepared Place**

It’s not some ethereal fog in which we float around, but a place specially prepared for God’s children. Jesus said,

**John 14:2**

“In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you”

Saints, according to Revelation 21:27,

**Revelation 21:27**

“Nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

**Our Citizenship is in Heaven**

Saints, this earth is only our temporary home so we must be careful not to become too attached to the things of this world. Having a right understanding of heaven changes our perspective and priorities in this life, prompting us to lay up treasures in heaven rather than on earth.

According to Philippians 3:20-21,

**Philippians 3:20-21**

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Saints, these earthly bodies are not fit for life in heaven.

Therefore, when Christ returns for us, He’s going to transform them into glorious bodies like His. Although we don’t know exactly what we’ll look like, we can be sure that our new heavenly bodies will be far more glorious than the ones we have now.

**The names of those who are Saved are recorded in Heaven as Citizens of His kingdom**

Saints, when Jesus sent out seventy disciples to heal and proclaim the kingdom of God, they came back saying,

**Luke 10:17**

“Even the demons are subject to us in Your name”

But as impressive as this display of power was, Jesus told them,

**Luke 10:20**

“Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven”

Saints, whenever anyone turns from sin and believes in Jesus for salvation, that person’s name is forever recorded in heaven. Spiritually, believers are already in heaven. God views us in light of our relationship with His Son who took our sins upon Himself and gave us His perfect record of righteousness.

**Ephesians 2:5-7**

5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Saints, in God’s mind it’s as if we are already there. As a further guarantee of our spiritual position in heaven, we who have believed in Christ have been…

**“Sealed”**

**Ephesians 1:13-14**

13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Saints, no matter what we face now, our eternal hope is secure, and in God’s presence everything will be perfect. When life is tough, we can find hope in knowing what the Lord has in store for us in heaven.

Although our desires may not be fulfilled in this life, in eternity all our longings will be satisfied. Knowing our heavenly position also increases our desire to live a godly life now because that is our destiny. Once we enter heaven, we will be freed from sin completely and be absolutely holy.

**Heaven is Where our Treasure is**

Saints, Jesus warned His followers not to accumulate earthly goods that do not last, but to

**Matthew 6:19-21**

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Our security is not found in money or property. Anything that can be bought can also be lost, and nothing we accumulate will come with us when we die. The only thing that will last is our relationship with Christ. And our heavenly treasures are our good deeds, obedience, holiness, and actions of love, kindness, and forgiveness.

**Our inheritance and Rewards are in Heaven**

Salvation is by faith not works, but once we’re saved, we do good works because we’re God’s children. And when we get to heaven, we will be rewarded for what we have done.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told those who were persecuted, insulted, and slandered because of Him,

**Matthew 5:10-12**

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Peter also says that we have an awesome inheritance

**1 Peter 1:3-5**

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

**Our Saved Loved Ones and Friends are there**

Saints, when a believer dies, he or she goes immediately into the presence of the Lord in heaven.

**2 Corinthians 5:7-8**

7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Saints, however, one day Jesus will return for His church, and He’s going to bring with Him those who have died in Christ

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-16**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

**They will be resurrected first:**

**1 Thessalonians 4:17-18**

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Saints, that a grand reunion that will be when we are all gathered together in our heavenly home!

But for the unbelievers who have rejected Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will find themselves in a place od eternal torment!

**Revelation 20:11-15**

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

**Revelation 21:8 (Living Bible Translation)**

8 But cowards who turn back from following me, and those who are unfaithful to me, and the corrupt, and murderers, and the immoral, and those conversing with demons, and idol worshipers and all liars-their doom is in the Lake that burns with fire and sulphur. This is the Second Death."

**1. Have you ever seriously thought about heaven?**

**2. More importantly, are you confident that you will go there when you die?**

**3. What did Jesus mean when He claimed to be the only way (John 14:6)?**

**4. How has this sermon changed your perspective of heaven?**

**5. How will it affect the way you live now?**

**6. What changes are you going to make as a result of your greater understanding of heaven?**

**Let's Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace." '**