



Sowing the seed (Luke 8:11) into the hearts of mankind.

Sevierville Church of Christ | 208 Hicks Drive | Sevierville, TN 37862 | (865) 453-8009 | seviervillecoc.org

April 10, 2022

Heaven on Earth

Robert Johnson

Have you ever heard someone describe something they have done or would like to do by saying, “Oh, that would be Heaven on Earth!”? The phrase refers to the joy or delight a person receives from anything that offers them pleasure and happiness. This is consistent with the idea many have of Heaven in the afterlife, which is filled with joy and with no sorrow or regret. For them, the statement, “That would be Heaven on Earth,” is apropos of the feelings they have.

Of course, Heaven is a spiritual place rather than a physical location. Therefore, to speak of Heaven on Earth is really an oxymoron. Also, many of the things people describe as being “Heaven” in this life are not those matters that will either commend us to live there in eternity or be found there. However, if one were to look for the closest entity on earth that could be associated with Heaven, what would it be? Perhaps to answer that question we should seek to understand what Scripture says about Heaven itself. It is a place where the saved of all ages will be gathered for eternity (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 3:5; 21:7). It is a place where God is worshipped (Revelation 5:11-14). It is a place where God will be served (Revelation 7:15). It is a place where the God Who is love will fully express that love, without the consequences of sin besetting us (1 John 4:16; Revelation 21:4). So, considering all of this, what we seek must be something spiritual in nature.

Knowing these things – how Heaven is described in Scripture – what in this life can be experienced in eternity? Perhaps the closest expression of Heaven on earth is found in the Lord’s church. This is where the saved have been added by the Lord (Acts 2:47). Christians worship God as the church in spirit and truth (John 4:24; Hebrews 10:25). Through the church, we are strengthened and encouraged to serve God (Romans 12:11; Hebrews 12:28; 1 Peter 4:10; Hebrews 6:10; Galatians 5:13). God’s love is fully expressed in the church – the body of the saved (1 John 3:11; 1 Corinthians 13:13).

If these things are true, then, just how important is being part of the Lord’s church to you? If assembling with brothers and sisters in

Christ is unimportant now, if it’s not an experience you would call Heaven on Earth, why would you think the actual Heaven is something you would want to experience? If worshipping God is not considered Heaven on Earth, something from which you have no problem being absent, why would you find joy in worshipping God in Heaven? If serving God is not something you feel motivated to do – not a Heaven on Earth type of experience – why would you think serving God in Heaven is something you would like? If we ignore God’s love today by ignoring its manifold expressions – not cherishing it as a Heaven on Earth experience – why would we look forward to enduring it forever in Heaven?

This is an issue because we don’t love with the love of God, we don’t comprehend the depth of meaning Jesus’ death should have to us and we have been deluded into thinking that no matter how we treat God’s church, He isn’t offended. Really? How can we think this way? The church was in the mind of God from eternity (Ephesians 3:9-10). He sent His Son to die for it so that we might be purified from sin and be prepared for eternity (Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 John 3:1-3). How can we allow a love for the world to supplant love for God (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17)? In reality, every excuse we offer to dismiss the church and its role in our lives is an indication of a lack of love and a disrespect for God. One may want to go to Heaven to avoid Hell, but if the spiritual is lacking in everyday living, if we don’t live on Earth in anticipation of Heaven, we will miss Heaven. If earthly hobbies enthrall us more than the hope of Heaven, will we be able to experience Heaven?

We beg, plead and pray for people to love the Lord, to love His Son and to love His church, because God and His Son love the church. We shouldn’t have to be prodded along to reflect this in our lives. Being part of God’s church family should be a foretaste of Heaven on Earth, for all it means to us and for all we mean to each other. Without a love of the church and a preference for brethren (1 Peter 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8), will we know Heaven in eternity? “The one who sows to his flesh will reap destruction from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit” (Galatians 6:8).

Prayer Requests & Announcements

Saying thank you seems inadequate to express my appreciation for all the love I've been shown going into and after my surgery on Tuesday! Everything has gone very well. Your continued prayers as I recover is appreciated as well. I hope to see you in person after a couple weeks.

Most sincerely,
Dawn Sutton

Dawn Sutton had successful cancer surgery and is now recovering at home.

Remember in prayer Shawna Langston who was diagnosed on Friday with an acute upper respiratory infection.

Sue Roberts reports that her husband, Bobby, is in Smoky Mountain Rehab. He is weak and fell twice recently and broke a bone in his leg. Also, Sue is suffering with a pinched nerve in her back.

Remember in prayer Lenwood Johnson's sister, Becky Day, who was recently diagnosed with breast cancer.

Lyn Morris has been having problems with significant drops in her blood sugar. Also, her brother, Jim Cochran, fell recently and broke his hip and the socket.

Please pray for Chris Bender who had a biopsy recently and saw a surgeon to have tumors removed. Pre-cancerous growth was found and treatment will be needed.

Please keep Natasha Costello in your prayers. She and her son, Hayden, have been visiting our congregation, and she is facing multiple health issues.

Continue to pray for the Christians in Ukraine.

Continue to Remember...

Chris Bender, Andy Butts, John and Helen Carr, Connie Duncan, Dennis and Marty Danilchuk, Lindsey Johnson, Shirley McKnight, Sue Moore, Lyn Morris, Paul and Ellen Ostrander, Joanne Roark, Shirley Yeager, Penny Douglas (John and Helen Carr's niece), Becky Duncan (Joe and Connie's daughter-in-law), Belinda Lang (Kevin's aunt), Adam Lane (son-in-law of Vickie Price), Harlie McClung (John and Helen Carr's 12 year-old great-granddaughter), Anita Ogle (Sherry Simms' friend), Casie Rains (friend of the Hansens), Paul Rolan (Mary Kate's brother), Betty & Frankie Simms (Scott Simms' parents), Wayne Tart (Tammie Fish's brother).

Ladies' class Thursdays at 6:15 at the Hansen's house

Fellowship night: April 15, 6:30

Monthly afternoon song service: April 24

Fellowship lunch: May 1

Evangelism Materials

Extra supplies for our evangelism work are freely available in the supply room to our members. Instructional books, DVDs, and Bible study materials are available. We also have a variety of cards for our Compassion Card work.

Weekly Assemblies

Sunday: Bible Study 9 a.m.
Worship 10 a.m.
Worship 1 p.m.
Wednesday: Bible Class 7 p.m.

Changes Required to Enter Heaven

Gary C. Hampton

Heaven is the ultimate goal of Christians. Paul stated, "So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:6-8). He understood all of our actions would be judged and some would keep many out of God's eternal home (Galatians 6:7-8).

The apostle gave a short list of such sins in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. A fornicator is one involved in intimate relationships outside of marriage. Jesus listed this as the one reason a God-fearing individual could divorce his or her mate and be remarried without sinning (Matthew 19:9). Adultery involves a married person having intimate relations with someone not his or her spouse. It may be specified because it breaks up families and hurts a third party. The word translated "homosexuals" literally means "soft to touch." Vine says, "metaphorically, in a bad sense... persons in general, who are guilty of addiction to sins of the flesh." The sin of sodomy is described in Romans 1:26-27.

A thief takes what belongs to someone else, while those who are covetous desire "to have more... i.e., to have what belongs to others; hence, greedy of gain," according to Vine. Those who become intoxicated are drunkards. Revilers are abusive and profane. Those who are excessively grasping or covetous could be described as extortioners.

Paul next said the Christians at Corinth had previously participated in some of the sins listed. Lipscomb wrote, "The threefold 'but' in the clause which follows emphasizes strongly the contrast between their present state and their past, and the consequent demand which their changed position makes upon them." The apostle said they had been washed or baptized (Acts 22:16; Titus 3:5). They had also been sanctified or set apart to do God's will. Further, Paul said they had been justified or considered righteous because their sins had been remitted. "Do you not know that **the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?** Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were **washed**, but you were **sanctified**, but you were **justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 NKJV).

Elders

Randy Hansen, Robert Moore, Kevin Ruiz, and Jerry Sutton

Deacon

Lenwood Johnson (finance)

Preacher

Kevin Ruiz