

One Minute After You Die

Slide -

One minute after you slip behind the parted curtain, you will either be enjoying a personal welcome from Christ Or catching your first glimpse of gloom as you have never known it.

Either way, your future will be irrevocably fixed and eternally unchangeable.

Those who find themselves in heaven will be surrounded by the family of God.

Slide - Our New Family

Think of it this way, the intimacy you now enjoy with your family will include all the other saints who are present.

Remember one day some of Christ's friends sent word that His mother and brothers were looking for him,

Slide - Christ responded, Mark 3:33-35 "But He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?" And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."

Think of the implications.

We will be just as close to Christ as we are to any member of our present family.

He is not ashamed to call us His brothers or sisters.

There will be extended family with far greater closeness than we have known of earth.

Think of the joys of such a family.

And the infinite time to become better acquainted.

Fortunately, heaven will not have everything.

Slide - Revelation 21:1 "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea."

Slide - Revelation 21:4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain,"

Slide - In Heaven No More Sea

Throughout the Bible sea stands for the nations of the world, usually rebellious nations.

The strife between nations and the turmoil that accompanies those struggles will vanish.

Slide - In Heaven No More Death

Today we look at death as a thief that robs us of our earthly existence.

It is simply the final act in the deterioration of the human body.

Slide - In Heaven No More Sorrow

Read the newspaper or listen to the news, sorrow is on every page or in most news stories.

You know what I mean, drunk driver kills a family, child rapped by mad man and the list goes on.

In heaven there will be uninterrupted joy and emotional tranquility.

Slide - In Heaven No More Crying

No one could possibly calculate the buckets of tears that are shed every single moment in this hurting world.

From the child crying because of the death of a parent to the women weeping because of a failed marriage.

Then multiply those tears by the millions and you will realize we live in a crying world.

Does the Lord come to us with a handkerchief and literally wipe away every tear?

God will give of explanation for the sorrow we experienced on earth so that we will not have to cry anymore.

Being able to view the tearful events of earth from the perspective of heaven will dry up the tears forever.

Slide - In Heaven No More Pain

Visit someone in the hospital and see and hear the pain around you.

Sure, modern medicine has prepared painkillers to help people make it through life one day at a time.

In heaven pain, which is the result of sin, is banished forever.

No migraine headaches, torn back discs, arthritis, broken bones and such.

And no more emotional pain because of rejection, separation or abuse.

Slide - Revelation 22:14-15 “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.”

Slide - Heaven is a Place of Security

We and other people have nice houses and wonderful possessions and may have elaborate security systems.

But the security offered is not permanent, houses can be burned, possessions lost or stolen.

Nothing on earth can give security that is eternal, but the Lords does.

Slide - Revelation 22:3 “And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.”

Slide - Heaven is a Place of Activity

There will be work to be done in heaven. As it says we shall serve Him.

First there will be worship of God.

Repeatedly John sees worship taking place in heaven.

Our arrival in heaven will only be a continuation of what we have already begun, praise will be His forever.

Secondly there will be the serving of the Most High in whatever capacity assigned to us.

We do not know what exactly we will do but of this we can be certain, heaven is not a place of inactivity or boredom.

Whatever our activity we can be sure that our infinite heavenly Father will have infinite possibilities.

Slide - 1 Corinthians 2:9 “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

Slide - Heaven is a Place of Beauty

Heaven is a place of incredible and indescribable beauty.

Maybe some of you have stood at the brink of the Grand Canyon and beheld a breath-taking view.

Or have stood at the edge of Niagara Falls and looked from the American side and the Canadian side.

We marvel at the beauty of God creation

It will be beyond our conception, it will be so beautiful, so wonderful, so great.

As I said at the start others will be catching their first glimpse of gloom as you have never known it.

Others, indeed many others, as it is written, Jesus said,

Slide - Matthew 7:13 “for broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.”

Many others will be shrouded in darkness, a region of deprivation and unending regret.

There, with their memories and feelings fully intact, images of their life on earth will return to haunt them.

They will look back on and brood over opportunities they squandered.

They intuitively know that their future is both hopeless and unending.

For them, death will be far worse than they imaged.

In continuation of what I talked about last week, hades will be eventually thrown into hell.

But before that happens every person will be resurrected and judged individually.

Slide - Revelation 20:12 “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.”

No one is saved by works, to be sure.

Salvation is a gift from God.

But for the unsaved the works are the basis of judgement.

In other words, they will be rightly judged on the basis of what they did with what they knew.

Those who live without the specific knowledge about Christ will be judge by the light of nature and their own conscience.

Slide - Romans 2:14—16 “for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them”

That does not mean that those who respond to general revelation will be automatically saved, for no lives up to all that they know.

That is why personal knowledge of Christ is needed for salvation.

Slide - Acts 4:12 “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

The light of God in nature and in the human conscience is still a sufficient basis of judgement.

Whatever the degree of punishment, it will fit the offense exactly, for God is meticulously just.

Those who are in Christ receive mercy those who are not receive justice.

Think how accurately God will judge everyone not in Christ.

Each day of every life will be analyzed in minute detail.

The hidden thoughts and motives of each hour replayed, along with all the actions and attitude.

The words spoken in secret will be made public, the intentions of the heart displayed for all to see.

They will have no attorney to whom they may appeal, no loopholes by which they can escape.

Nothing but bare indisputable facts.

The balance of justice will be so accurate that the sinner will wish they had never lied, stolen or cheated.

Before God, no motives will be misinterpreted, no extenuating circumstances thrown out of court.

Our news is filled with stories of rape, child abuse, murder and a myriad of injustices.

Every court case ever tried on earth will be reopened.

Each action and motive will be meticulously inspected and just retribution meted out.

In the presence of an all-knowing God there will be no unsolved murders, no unknown child abductor or hidden bribe.

Hell exists because unbelievers are eternally guilty.

The powerful lesson to be learned is that no human suffering can ever be a payment for sin.

If our suffering could erase even the most insignificant sin, then those in hell would eventually be freed after their debt was paid.

All human goodness and suffering from the beginning of time, if added together, could not cancel so much as a single sin.

Slide - A Place of Torment

Usually when we think of hell, we think of fire, since Christ spoke of the "fire of hell"

In Revelation we also read of "the lake of fire and brimstone."

There is no reason the torments of hell could not include physical fire, since the bodies of those present will have been recreated and made indestructible.

Unlike our present bodies, those of the resurrected dead will not burn or be extinguished.

Literal fire is possible.

However as well learned last week there is another kind of fire that will be in hell.

A fire that maybe worst than literal fire.

That is the fire of unfulfilled passion, of desires that are never satisfied.

Perpetual burning lusts, never subdued.

The tormented conscience burns but is never quenched or appeased.

There will be increased desire with decreased satisfaction.

Hell, is the raw soul joined with an indestructible body, exposed to its own sin for an eternity.

Hell is the place of unquenchable, raging guilt, without pain killers or sedation.

Literal fire might be welcomed if only it would cleanse the tormented conscience.

Be assured of this; Neither the devil nor his angles will torment people in hell.

Satan and his demons will be among the tormented, they will not be tormentors.

Slide - A Place of Abandonment

If you remember, in hades there was an unbridgeable chasm between the two men, the rich man and Lazarus.

But at least they could speak to one another.

But it is unlikely that there will be the opportunity of such communication in hell.

For one thing Abraham's bosom was transferred directly into the presence of Christ at His ascension.

Jesus told the thief on the cross

Slide - Luke 23:43 "And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

The rich man and Lazarus story was told before Christ's death and resurrection.

For another reason, we have no suggestion in the New testament that those in hell will be able to communicate with each other.

C.S. Lewis believed there would not be communication in hell because it is a place of solitude.

Jonathan Edwards believed that if unbelievers are next to one another they would only add to each other's agony through expressions of hatred, accusations and curses.

Of one thing we can be absolutely certain, no comfort will be derived from the presence of others.

Consumed with the torment of raging, unforgiven sin, those in hell will never find comfort again.

Slide - However, Revelation 14:10 tells us "He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb."

Nothing is said about whether other people behold the sufferings of the damned although we read in

Slide - Psalm 46:8-9 "Come, behold the works of the Lord, Who has made desolations in the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire."

Slide - Isaiah 66: 23-24 "And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the Lord. "And they shall go forth and look Upon the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

So, God does invite righteous people or angles to behold judgement He inflicts on the wicked.

If believers do witness these events, we can be sure that they will agree completely with the justice displayed by God, for then they shall see all things from His point of view.

Thus, the righteous can enjoy the bliss of heaven knowing full well the fate of the wicked in hell.

Though Dante added many of his own ideas to the superstitions of his day when he wrote "The Inferno"

He does portray some biblical teaching of hopelessness and abandonment.

This he wrote on the doorway to hell.

Slide - “THROUGH ME THE WAY INTO THE GRIEVING CITY, THROUGH ME THE WAY INTO ETERNAL SORROW, THROUGH ME THE WAY AMONG THE LOST PEOPLE. JUSTICE MOVED MY HIGH MAKER; DIVINE POWER MADE ME, HIGHEST WISDOM, AND PRIMAL LOVE. BEFORE ME WERE NO THINGS CREATED EXCEPT ETERNAL. ONES, AND I ENDURE ETERNAL. ABANDON EVERY HOPE, YOU WHO ENTER”

Jonathan Edwards pointed out that those in hell will have no reason for entertaining any secret hope that after being in the flames for many ages God will take pity on them and release them.

He goes on to say that God will not be any more inclined to release them after a million ages than He was at the very first moment.

Little wonder that any description we give of hell can be but a faint representation of its reality.

Slide - A Place of Eternity

How long is eternity?

Visualize a rocket ship coming to earth every million years and taking one grain of sand to a distant planet.

At that rate it would take thousands of millions of years before that ship had carried away a single handful of sand.

I don't know if any of you have been to or seen Siesta Key beach, one of Americas top 5 beaches.

Now let's say that ship moved the sand on that beach and all the other thousands of beaches around the world.

By the time that ship had transported all those grains of sand to that far off planet eternity would not have officially begun.

Strictly speaking you cannot begin an infinite series, for a beginning implies an end.

In other words, after that ship did all its work, those in hell eternally will not be one step closer to having their suffering alleviated.

The most sobering thought that should cross our minds is the fact that the rich man in hades has not yet received the drop of water for which he so desperately longed.

Today as I speak, he is still waiting the final judgement of the lake of fire.

Slide - A Place of Easy Access but No Exit.

Entering hell is easy enough.

All one has to do is neglect Christ, the only one who can save us.

The reason I am quoting Jonathan Edwards a lot is because he gave more consideration to the doctrine of hell than many other preachers.

His sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” kept audiences spellbound.

He made an interesting point, he stated that there are some people now living for who God has more anger than some who are in hades already, who have died.

Therefore, it is only the mercy of God that kept them from plunging into the abyss.

So, I have laid out for you two eternal destinations, Heaven and Hell

Yes, a lot of people believe in an afterlife but not in a life as I describe Hell as.

Jesus talked about it more than any other person in the Bible.

Did He say this simply to scare us?

The reality of hell should frighten us, because not one word in the Bible about hell should ever make you want to go there — not if you take it seriously.

But Jesus didn't talk about hell just to scare us.

He talked about it instead because He wanted us to know that God has provided a way of escape!

Listen: God doesn't want you to be separated from Him forever.

He loves you, and He wants you to spend eternity with Him in heaven.

That's why God gives us the truth because love is truth.

Truth like

Slide - Hebrews 12:25 "See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven"

Slide - Philippians 2:10-11 "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Slide - John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Don't gamble with your soul, by faith turn to Christ and commit your life to Him.

He alone gives us hope — hope for today, and hope for eternity.