

A Journey with Christ the Messiah

I Go to Prepare a Place for You

John 14:1-6

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing a series that I have entitled *A Journey with Christ the Messiah*.

Many people believe that there is an afterlife. Many of us believe that there is an eternal heaven reserved for the children of God. The problem for many is that they have heard of heaven so many times that the thrill of living eternally with God in heaven has faded away. We often get so caught up in our daily lives, that we fail to reflect **by our lives** how glorious that day will be! Heaven is by far greater than anything here on earth because it is eternal and free from sin. Everything in this world is temporal and will go away.

ILLUSTRATION:

Consider how the world would react if the cure for all cancer was discovered and the treatment was free to anyone who needed it. **Can you imagine the excitement that would accompany such an event?**

Heaven will be greater than **anything** here on earth including a free cure for cancer. Why? Because our time on earth is temporal. If you were cured of cancer, it may prolong your life and give you a better life, but you will still die. The earth is going away whether you have cancer or not.

Christ assures us that His return **CAN** be the most wonderful thing that we will ever experience! He pleads to us to rekindle our excitement for His return and be prepared for it.

One of the great things about knowing Christ (the Messiah) is that we can rest upon His promises and have an assured hope for the future that the rest of the world cannot know.

This morning we are going to look at Christ's encouragements to His disciples just before He faces crucifixion and tackle the question for today, "**When this life is over, what happens next?**" Will we just die, be buried into the ground, and then cease to exist?

Last week we spoke of the certainty of Christ's second coming to judge all people. Today we are going to look at what Christ taught concerning life after death.

All Stand and Read Scripture

John 14:1-6 (NASB)

14 "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 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. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way where I am going." ⁵ Thomas *said to Him, "Lord, we do not know **where** You are going, how do we know the **way**?" ⁶ Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

As we prepare to continue on this journey, let's bow in a word of prayer.

Prayer

Let's continue the journey!

BODY:

I. LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED.

Just prior to Jesus saying these words he had dropped three big bombshells on his disciples. Jesus told them that He will be going away and they could not come. He told them one of them was a traitor. He told Peter that he would deny him three times. That is a lot to take in and you can imagine how the disciples were disheartened.

So Jesus said to the disciples "**Do not let your heart be troubled...**"

Now, what is really amazing about this statement is when you consider what Jesus Himself was facing. Jesus knew that ridicule was forthcoming. He knew He was going to be humiliated with a purple robe and a crown of thorns. He knew that He was going to be scourged with a cat of nine tails. He knew that He was soon to face the dreaded cross! He would have to carry it, in total exhaustion, up a shameful hill at a place called "the skull." His only reprieve from its weight would be when He was finally nailed to it and dropped into the rocky ground.

Yet despite all of this, Jesus took time to comfort his disciples with this command: "**Do not let **your** heart be troubled...**"

Jesus knew that they would soon be experiencing His death on the cross and they, no doubt, would start to have second thoughts about Him. They would be shamefully disappointed. They had thought that by now Jesus would be setting up an earthly kingdom and be delivering them and the Jews from the Roman empire. They would start to wonder if leaving their earthly jobs to follow this man was such a good idea after all.

Jesus knows when we are sad. He knows when we are confused. He knows when we are mad. He knows when we are depressed and in despair. And of course, Jesus knows when we are troubled!

Like the disciples, Jesus wants us to know that He has not forgotten about you or forsaken you. "**Do not let **your** heart be troubled...**"

Jesus teaches us the absurdity of thinking he doesn't care about you.

Matthew 6:25-27 (NASB)

²⁵ “For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, *as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on.* Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and *yet your heavenly Father feeds them.* Are you not worth much more than they? ²⁷ And who of you by being worried can add a *single hour to his life?*

When Jesus said that he was going to a place where they could not go, they must have felt somewhat abandoned. In our hardest trials we think God has abandoned us, when in reality if anyone has abandoned anyone - it is **we** who abandon **Him**. Jesus promised "**I will never leave you nor forsake you**" and yet when hard times come our way that is exactly what we so often believe.

Jesus wants us to know that HE is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. If we will just put our trust in Him, He promises that we will be all right. Instead of worrying about earthly things we are to be seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness. We are to search for the small gate with the narrow path that leads to eternal life.

All of us are on a journey, all of us are walking on a path.

Matthew 7:13-14 (NASB)

¹³ “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴ For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Jesus reminds us there are two possible paths to follow. One is the wide path that will lead to destruction. The second is the narrow path that will lead to eternal life with God.

ILLUSTRATION:

When a hunter prepares for a deer hunt, he will walk into the woods before the deer season begins and look for deer runs. These runs are very narrow trails that deer make while going back and forth through the woods. A trail is made by repeated traveling. We generally miss the meaning of this "**narrow way**" analogy because of how roads are created today. Today, big bulldozers, road graders, dump trucks, steam rollers, etc. make us a nice wide smooth road to travel safely and quickly on. So if I want to go to Silver Dollar City from here in Greenwood, I just type my starting point and destination into my GPS and get directions. The roads are already there, they have already been made for me. I just need to figure out which ones to take to get me to my destination.

In biblical times you created roads yourselves. I don't mean people went out with picks, shovels, and so forth, but remember how a trail or a way is made. Trails are made by travelers. the easier and wider the trail the more it was traveled. The narrower and harder the trail the less it was traveled.

Our nature is to take the most convenient way to anything. The way to hell is easy and convenient, just follow your nature and you will have a lot of company.

God did not create a **narrow way** because of a **desire** that He only wanted a few people to travel to heaven. **The way is narrow because only few people desire to travel to God!** Most people are not willing to pick up their cross and follow Jesus.

II. PHYSICAL DEATH IS NOT THE END OF YOUR EXISTENCE.

When one considers what happens next, after we breathe our last breath, we need to understand that when we die physically, it is just our body that dies, our spirit is released from the body to go to its appointed place.

When you are in Christ and you die, your spirit goes to dwell with Him until the Second Coming when Jesus returns and this time period of complete!

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NASB)

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep 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 not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Notice Paul tells us that Jesus will bring with Him those who have died before His return. If we are alive when Jesus returns, we will meet Him in the air!

The Second Coming is tied to the resurrection of everyone!

Ok, what is next?

Revelation 20:11-15 (NASB)

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Now we examine the ONLY two possible outcomes for one's life.

I am going to look at these paths in reverse order than it is written in the text because I do not want to end on a sad note!

III. THE TWO PATHS TO ETERNAL LIFE.

The first outcome from one's life is the outcome that will befall everyone who is not a part of the Family of God, that is, anyone who is not an immersed believer in Christ!

Look at verse 15 again.

Revelation 20:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

This is not a place you want to end up spending eternity. It is the place the Bible calls hell.

Revelation 21:8 (NASB)

⁸ But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

This does not sound like the place to spend eternity!

This verse gives a list of those who will end up with this tragic fate. This is just a partial list of those who will not find their names written in the Lamb's book of life. These have a deeper problem. They have no relationship with Jesus. They are not a part of God's family.

We know this because the way you get your name written in the book of life is by being clothed with Christ and staying clothed with Him!

Galatians 3:25-27 (NASB)

²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. ²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Now people will wonder how a loving God would send someone to hell. The answer is, He does not, we chose it for ourselves!

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NASB)

³ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

We know that God so loved the world, that He sent Jesus to die on the cross so that our sins could be washed away and we could be saved. If we miss out on the riches of heaven, it is because **we** made the choice and God honored our choice!

Heaven is indescribable! The apostle John tries his best to show us what he saw in his vision from God, but how do you describe something indescribable?

How do you draw a picture of love? How do you draw a picture of heaven?

When you look around you, what do you see? You see suffering, pain, sadness, disease, violence, tragedy. Listen to what an eternity with God will be like!

Revelation 21:1-4 (NASB)

²¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there

will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

How many tears have you shed during this life? NO MORE TEARS!

How many loved ones have you lost to death? NO MORE DEATH!

How much crying have you done? NO MORE CRYING!

How much PAIN have you experienced? NO MORE PAIN!

This is the place Jesus spoke of in John 14. The place He has been preparing for those who are in Christ.

The biggest tragedy is the fact that many will miss out because they will choose to stay on the wide path that leads to destruction!

The Apostle Paul had an internal struggle, stay here or go be with Jesus!

Philippians 1:23-25 (NASB)

²³ But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *that* is very much better; ²⁴ yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith,

Heaven is real, Jesus wants you to be there with Him. It is not His fault if you choose not to go! Jesus died for you on the cross so you would not have to miss the joys of heaven.

The choice one has to make in this life is simple, will you be prepared to spend eternity with God, or will spend it apart from Him?

CONCLUSION:

Jesus said “**I am the way the truth and the life no man comes to the but by me.**” We may **not know** exactly **where** heaven is but we **do** know **the way** to heaven The only way to the Father is through the Son. The small gate is the gate of Jesus Christ!

It is easy to be **troubled** when we know the world is mostly against us. But we can take heart for Christ has overcome the world! He comforts us with his promises and His word shows us the way.

NO ONE needs to perish! We all can experience the joy of eternal life with Jesus! The only way one can experience eternal life is through a relationship with Jesus Christ!

John 14:6 (NASB)

⁶ Jesus *said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Jesus tells us that He is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father except THROUGH HIM!

He is Lord!