

Newsletter August 2020

From Heaven's Heart

"In The Midst of The Mess...we can be safe and secure"

Colossians 3:1 says, "Since you have been raised to a new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand."

I don't know how you are feeling about all the things going on around us today, things that we seem to have very little control over. Some days, I'm not sure how to feel or how to respond to the mess we seem to be in...but there is one thing I am absolutely sure of...God offers us a clear picture of what is ahead. There will be an end to the mess and Jesus and His mighty, unstoppable army will be the only army still standing when it's all over. Victory will be His. And all His people will still be standing strong with Him in our Heavenly homes with all other believers. When that day comes, when Jesus returns for a second time, the mess will be behind us and we will be so happy we believed and faithfully followed Christ.

In the meantime, life goes on and God tells us what to do while we wait for Christ to return. He tells us that even in the midst of the mess, as believers, we have been raised to a new life with Christ. So move your eyes from the mess that the world/Satan has caused to the realities of Heaven where Christ sits at God's right hand.

Heaven! We have many misconceptions about what heaven is like and I believe, with God's help, we can clear a few things up about Heaven. Here we go.

You won't be an angel. You won't have wings. You're not going to be a little chubby cherub, wear a white robe, or float on clouds.

We need a correct view of heaven. So what does the Bible say about Heaven? Here's what Pastor Rick Warren wrote.

1. Heaven is where God lives and rules. The Bible calls heaven "the dwelling place of God," "the house of God," and "the city of God." It's where God lives, but Jesus also calls heaven "the Kingdom of God" or "the Kingdom of Heaven" 31 times in Scripture.

2. Heaven is a real place. Heaven isn't a state of mind. It isn't a state of being. And it isn't a place where your essence floats around like a ghost. In fact, the Bible says there will be streets, trees, water, and homes in heaven. Many Scriptures allude to the fact that animals are there. We'll have our physical bodies, renewed through our resurrection. Matthew 6:20 says we're storing up treasures in heaven. You can't store up treasures in a place that isn't real.

3. Heaven is designed for you and me. God didn't design heaven for himself. He designed it for us. When God started thinking about earth, he started thinking about heaven. The Bible says

God made the entire universe because he wanted a family to spend eternity with. Heaven is the place he's designed for his family. We weren't meant to live on earth. You and I were made for heaven!

When it comes to heaven, *"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"* (1 Corinthians 2:9 NIV). The realities of heaven far exceed any of our misconceptions!

It sounds to me that when I take my last breath on earth, assuming Jesus doesn't come back first, and He may given the mess we are in, Heaven is the place I want to spend eternity, with God, with my family, and with you. God says, we can't imagine the home He has prepared for those of us who love Him. Don't miss the end of this sentence...For those who love Him. There is a condition for us to arrive and to live with God in Heaven. John 3:16. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes would never perish but would live forever and ever in the home He prepared for all who love Him. If we believe, we will love Him. And if we love Him, while we remain here on earth, in the midst of this mess, we have a job to do. Jesus said, "Take up your cross and follow me." Go and do all you can do, empowered by Him, and make followers, believers and together, we can help clean up the mess.

When we decided to re-open church and welcome those who felt it was safe enough to return to church, I was a little nervous about our decision. So I did two things. I prayed about it and Mike and I did all we could to be sure it would be safe. We all know that life is filled with risk and we want to be wise in our decisions. The wisest decision we can make is to love God and to love others. There are other things I'm positive about but loving God, loving others and looking forward to Heaven, I am 100% sure of. I pray that you are too.

Hope to see you Sunday...either at church or on your TV. Be sure and invite a neighbor, friend or co-worker. Your invitation may secure them a home for all eternity in Heaven.

With my most fervent prayers for your safety here on earth and for your eternal security in Heaven,

Pastor Steve

P.S. Thank you for your kind words of encouragement that come to me via text, calls, letters and personal words. And thank you for inviting others to worship with us, for your prayers and your faithful financial support. We could not do all we do without you.