

Resource Package

**Monologue: “In Light of Eternity”**

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*“Entrance into Heaven is not at the hour of death, but at the moment of conversion.”* Benjamin Whichcote

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I’ve been thinking a lot about heaven lately. Maybe it’s just the mood I’ve been in, or the fact that I have attended far too many funerals lately, but heaven is a topic that has been on my mind. Now, don’t get me wrong, I am in no hurry to get there. I have no desire at the moment to leave this earth. And I am not thinking about heaven in a morose or morbid kind of way, either. But, I do wonder what it will be like.

I know we have descriptions of heaven in the Bible - with the mansions being prepared; and the pearly gates, all twelve of them; the streets of gold, and all of that. But what will it really be like? I wonder…

*PAUSE*

I know there will be no more night. Revelation tells us that. To me, that sounds fab!! No more night, and no more of all the things that are associated with night. Darkness, sickness, worry, anxiousness, shame, doubt…all GONE! How amazing would that be?

But perhaps the best thing about heaven, for me anyway, is that God will be there. That thought is amazing. Even more amazing than the though of my loved ones, the fact that I will get to see God face to face is awesome! Confucius said, “Heaven means to be one with God.” I wonder what that will be like - to be one with God.

*PAUSE*

Wait a minute! “Heaven means to be one with God.” Isn’t that why Jesus came to earth, so we could be one with God? Did Jesus not say that he came so we could “have life and have it to the full?” (John 10:10)

So, if Jesus’ calling was to bring us a full life, then, if we love God, and seek him in everything we do, are we not striving to be one with God now? Add to that the fact that throughout Scripture, we read that Jesus said, “The Kingdom of Heaven is now.”

*PAUSE*

In light of this, perhaps my journey to heaven is not just something that happens when I die, but happens right here, right now. I heard it said once that, “Entrance into Heaven is not at the hour of death, but at the moment of conversion.” If this is true, then I am living in the right of eternity right here, right now. The life that I live is a heavenly life because of Jesus, because of the Cross, because of God’s love for humankind, because God saves, reconciles and calls.

Billy Graham said, “Heaven doesn’t make this life less important; it makes it more important.” So, as I continue to think about heaven, and what a glorious day it will be to see Jesus face to face, I am going to continue to live the heavenly life here on earth, in light of eternity.

**Call to Worship – Based on Philippians 3**

**Leader**: BE GLAD IN THE LORD! The people of God are the ones the spirit of God leads to work away at this ministry, filling the air with Christ’s praise as we do it. Let us throw aside everything that may hinder us in the true worship of the Lord so that we may embrace Christ and be embraced by him!

**Congregation**: Let us empty ourselves so that we may know Christ personally, experience his resurrection power, and be a partner in his suffering.

**Leader**: BE GLAD IN THE LORD! We are reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for us.

**Congregation**: We have our eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward to Jesus. We are off and running! We are not turning back!

**Leader:** BE GLAD IN THE LORD and keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision-you’ll see it yet. Let’s stay on the right track!

**Congregation:** There is far more to life for us! We are citizens of high heaven! We are waiting for the Savior, the Master, Jesus Christ who will transform our earthly bodies into glorious bodies like his own. He’ll make us beautiful and whole! We will BE GLAD IN THE LORD!

**Take the 7 Day “More to Life” Challenge**

Find a quiet place and listen as the Lord speaks as you seek Him, either at the beginning of your day or at the end of your day. Some of us have a very difficult time catching the quiet moments. It’s a discipline that we need to constantly cultivate in our spiritual life and daily living.

This is your opportunity to RENEW YOU!

Jeremiah 31: 4 (THE MESSAGE) God told them, “I’ve never quit loving you and never will. Expect love, love, and more love! And so now I’ll start over with you and build you up again, dear virgin Israel. You’ll resume your singing, grabbing tambourines and joining the dance. You’ll go back to your old work of planting vineyards on the Samaritan hillsides, and sit back and enjoy the fruit.

In committing to this challenge you are invited to follow the directions given below.

During this time of reflection and prayer, imagine how God sees you at this very moment

1. Be Thankful for the life you have in God, for this new day/or for the day that is finishing

2. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring light that you might see what he wants you to see in this day or as you recall the day

3. Consider the hours of your day, take your time and review the day, or think of the things that you will do, those things that are on your schedule to complete, the people you will encounter, the responsibilities that are yours OR If you are reviewing the day think of what has been accomplished, the people you have interacted with. What two experiences stand out in your mind?

**MONDAY: There’s more to life when………………….you are Listening**

READ: 1 Samuel 3

• “In the morning, O Lord… I wait in expectation of what you will do” (Psalm 5:3, paraphrase)

• “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10)

• “Let all the earth be silent before [the Lord].” (Habakkuk 2:20)

• Jesus said, “Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.” (John 5:24)

• “Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day.” (Genesis 3:8) Samuel 3

"Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts." SOURCE: <https://www.living-prayers.com/topics/listening_prayer.html#ixzz5mD6m7q5n>

THINK: What is the Lord saying to you?

PRAY:

Heavenly Father,

I wait upon you.

I pause, still my mind and still my heart.

I wait upon you.

I stop, and listen beyond the everyday.

I wait upon you.

I rest, and allow my soul to have space.

I wait upon you.

Quiet, at rest, held.

I wait upon you.

And call Abba, Abba Father.

I know you have searched me, and you know me.

I know you are the beginning and the end.

I know you are the Redeemer.

I wait upon you, allowing your grace to penetrate my whole being.

And in this place, close, protected and eternal I find that this grace renews my strength, Wipes away my tears, and promises new hope. I wait upon you.

SOURCE: <https://www.living-prayers.com/topics/listening_prayer.html#ixzz5mD6wZgAC>

ACT: Be aware of God speaking to you today. It may be through His word, a song, a Christian friend or a situation you are facing. Tell someone how you have been encouraged today by listening for God’s voice



**TUESDAY: There’s more to life when………………….you are walking**

READ: 1 John 1:6-7 If we say we have fellowship with him and yet keep on walking in the darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth. But if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

John 8:12 Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”

Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger bringing good news, Breaking the news that all’s well, proclaiming good times, announcing salvation, telling Zion, “Your God reigns!”

Psalm 25:4 &5 “Show me Your ways, O Lord, teach me Your paths; guide me in Your truth and teach me, for You are God my Savior, and my hope is in You all day long.”

THINK: Where will your feet take you today? Who will you speak with, serve, and interact with. How will they know you are walking in the light of God?

PRAY:

Father in Heaven,

Thank you for the promise and hope of Your word. Thank you that You can be counted on to guide me through my day. Today I need to walk in the hope that only You can give. My way is unclear, my path sometimes feels like it twists and turns in confusing and busy ways as I wind my way along my journey.

Show me Your ways, Lord. Show me how You would walk in these places. Teach me Your paths of grace and mercy and integrity and love. Help me to grasp Your ways so I can walk securely in them even in insecure places. I need Your perspective today.

Guide me in Your truth, Lord. Without Your Word active in my heart and mind I cannot know Your truth. Help me to make time to read my Bible. Help me to take time to think on it and let it penetrate my heart. Lord, Your Word will guide me as a beacon and a light. I need Your word to guide me. Forgive me when I have left it on the shelf or have simply grabbed a verse and run off for the day, quickly forgetting what I read.

Thank you that You promise to guide me and teach me as I let Your truth impact my heart and my mind.

Oh Lord, You are my Savior, my rescuer and my redeemer. You alone are the One who restores and renews my spirit and brings meaning to my life. You bless me. May my heart overflow with thanksgiving to You for Your hand in my life.

I will put my hope in you today, all day long. Remind me by Your Holy Spirit to look to You to guide me. Call me into Your quiet presence to think on Your truths and may I not be distracted. This is the oxygen of my soul. Thank you that You give the hope and help and peace I need today. Thank you that You never cease to call me to Yourself. Help me to respond afresh to Your presence in my life. In Jesus’ strong name I pray, amen.

Source: http://www.gailrodgers.ca/index.php/site/prayerItem/prayer\_to\_walk\_with\_god\_all\_day\_long/

ACT: Take a walk around your neighbourhood today. Thank God for the beauty of your world. Thank Him for your neighbours and friends. Pray for first responders, teachers, medical staff, clergy, those who serve and those who need you.



**WEDNESDAY: There’s more to life when……………you are serving**

READ: Joshua 22:4 But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to keep his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Romans 12:9-13 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Colossians 3:23-24 “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”

Philippians 2:5-7 “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”

THINK: When do you feel closest to the Lord? How do you serve others?

PRAY:

Here is a beautiful prayer written by Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Lord, teach me to be generous. Teach me to serve you as you deserve.

To give and not to count the cost. To fight and not to heed the wounds.

To toil and not to seek for rest. To labor and not to ask for reward.

Save that of knowing that I am doing your will. Amen.

ACT: Find an opportunity to serve someone today. Someone who would least expect it.



**Thursday: There’s more to life when…………………you are being kind**

READ:

Luke 6:27-26

Luke 10:29–37

Proverbs 3:3–6 (ESV)

Galatians 5:22-23

Luke 6:35

“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men

THINK : what does kindness look and sound like?

PRAY: Dear God, If I cannot be brilliant, let me be kind. If I cannot change the world, let me inspire just one other to do so. If I cannot give away riches, let me be loving. Let me be known for kindness, for it is the greatest glory. Amen

Source: https://www.beliefnet.com/prayables/prayers/prayer-to-god-short-prayers.aspx?p=10

ACT:

•Pay it Backward: buy coffee for the person behind you in line.

•Compliment the first three people you talk to today.

•Send a positive text message to five different people right now.

•Post inspirational sticky notes around your neighborhood, office, school, etc.

•Donate old towels or blankets to an animal shelter.

•Say hi to the person next to you on the elevator.

•Surprise a neighbor with freshly baked cookies or treats!

•Let someone go in front of you in line who only has a few items.

•Leave a gas gift card at a gas pump.

•Throw a party to celebrate someone just for being who they are, which is awesome.

•Have a LinkedIn account? Write a recommendation for coworker or connection.

•Leave quarters at the laundromat.

•Encounter someone in customer service who is especially kind? Take an extra five minutes to tell their manager.

•Leave unused coupons next to corresponding products in the grocery store.

•Leave a note on someone’s car telling them how awesome they parked.

•Try to make sure every person in a group conversation feels included.

•Write a kind message on your mirror with a dry erase marker for yourself, your significant other or a family member.

•Smile at five strangers.

For more ideas check the source: <https://www.coffeecupsandcrayons.com/100-acts-kindness-kids/>



**Friday: There’s more to life when…………………….you are running on empty**

READ: Matthew 11:28-29 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Psalm 62:1 “Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him.”

Psalm 4:8 “In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.”

Psalm 127:1-2 “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat— for he grants sleep to those he loves.”

2 Thessalonians 3:13 “And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good.”

Romans 12:11 “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.”

Psalm 46:1 “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

I Kings 8:56 “Praise be to the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.”

Jeremiah 31:25 “I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint.”

PRAY: Father, I’m completely worn out! Burned out, some would say. It seems like every moment of every day is taken up with people concerns; with things that need to be done—right away: family issues; church activities; demands placed upon me by others, constantly and consistently. I honestly don’t know if I have anything left to give—for I’m running on empty.

And yet, through all the chaos that is swirling around me, I hear You whisper: “Rest in me… Come; drink here at the oasis I’m providing-- just for you.” So I do as you say—to be refreshed, renewed, revitalized. And, within moments, I find myself suddenly re-energized-- to the point of desperately wanting to tell others of Your amazing, awesome, astonishing love.

Oh yes; there is so much more to life – with You at the very core of my being. Thank you, my Lord and Saviour! (written by Major Beverly Ivany)

THINK: This is your creed for this day (and every day!)

I will not worry through this day, I will take time to think and pray.

Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Psalm 62:5

I will wait and walk with God, remembering God often walks slowly.

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord (Psalm 27:14)

I will wait before God until I feel saturated with His presence, then I will go forth to my new duty with the conscious, freshness and vigour of Christ.

But those who hop in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; the will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:31

I will wait upon God in confidence, knowing He provides “resting’ place as well as working places. Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people success in their ways, when they carry out their wicked scheme (Psalm 37: 7, 34)

Hope in the Lord and keep his way. He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are destroyed, you will see it.

Source: Exploring Worship, Virginia Talmadge

ACT: Do something special for yourself today! Try to make it a habit!

Suggestions: Go for coffee with a friend; find a quiet place to retreat for a few hours; have a pedicure; or a foot massage; read a good book, take a walk through the ‘forest glades’; listen to the birds; take pictures of the scenery around your town, city, community.



**Saturday: There’s more to life when……………….you are with those you love**

READ:

“How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!” – Psalm 133:1

“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one’s youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.” Psalm 127:3-5

“So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” Romans 12:5

“Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.” Colossians 3:21

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.” Proverbs 17:17

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.” Romans 12:9

“We love because he first loved us.” 1 John 4:19

PRAY:

Compassionate Father, today we bring before you, those we love, especially members of our families. How we long for you to be gracious on behalf of our children, our parents, our siblings, our extended families, our friends, O Lord, there are so many for whom we carry heartbreaking concerns and heavy burdens.

Gracious Father, thank you for not only forming us in our mother’s womb, but also for revealing Jesus in our inner hearts. This gives us great courage in asking you to pour out your Spirit on a vast array of people we know:

For our children, siblings and parents who don’t know you, Father, bring them to a saving knowledge of Jesus. Above all, we are praying that a very real knowledge and experience of the grace and truth of the gospel will capture their hearts. More than anything else, we long to hear those we love say, “I belong to the Lord.”

Holy Spirit, for our family members and friends who are living like destructive idiots and senseless morons, do whatever it takes to save them from themselves. Arrest them in their foolishness and spare them with your grace-full-ness. To the meadows of their madness, bring the grandeur of your goodness.

Jesus, for those we know who love you deeply, but are in hard stories of failing health, financial stress, emotional/mental illness, marital meltdown, spiritual disconnect… pour forth your life-giving Spirit. Where there is floundering, bring flourishing; where there is despair, bring delight; where there is hopelessness, bring fruitfulness… all for your glory.

We forsake our fears in light of the pledge of your help. Humbly, expectantly and gratefully, we pray in your name, Jesus. Amen!

Source: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/scotty-smith/a-prayer-for-those-we-love/>

THINK: Is there a friend or family member who needs to hear from you today? How can you offer grace to a family member or a friend who has hurt you?

ACT: Plan a family/friends get together. Invite people you haven’t seen for a while. Celebrate your story!



**Sunday: There’s more to life when …………………you are worshipping the Lord**

READ:

1 Chronicles 16: 23-31

Sing to the Lord, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day.

Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his dwelling place.

Ascribe to the Lord, all you families of nations, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him.

Worship the Lord in the splendor of his[a] holiness

Tremble before him, all the earth! The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved.

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, “The Lord reigns!”

PRAY:

Father, it is only because of your love and grace, because of your own extravagant love, that we can even consider coming to your presence. It is only because of the gift of your precious Son who so willingly gave His life for us that we can approach your throne of grace. What joy we find as we contemplate the immeasurable gifts you have given us.

Immanuel. God with Us. Wonderful Counselor. Mighty God. Everlasting Father. Prince of Peace.

Your names evoke such a sense of wonder as we carefully think on each one, on the power-packed meaning behind them. You have been our God with Us, our Immanuel, in our times of greatest distress. You have been Wonderful in our lives as you pour out your power and love as a display to all the world. You have been our Counselor in those times when we were fraught with fear and confusion. You have been Mighty God when we were facing impossible situations. You have been our Everlasting Father as we face an unknown future. You have been our Prince of Peace in those times of utter chaos. You have been our Great I Am, exactly what we need exactly when we need it.

How can we ever repay you for all you are, for all you have done? It’s only by our worship, by our praise and adoration that we can begin to express to you all you mean to us. (On this day) we offer you the greatest offering we have. We pour out our hearts in a gift of extravagant worship. We pour out our finest praise to you.

You, Lord, are worthy. You are wonderful. You are more than we could ever ask or imagine.

THINK: Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men[a] from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.”… After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11

What are you bringing to Jesus today? What is your act of worship today? What is your gift? How will you declare who He is in your life?

ACT: Attend a worship service today. Encourage/Invite someone to go with you.

Exodus 14: 13 & 14 Don’t be afraid. Stand firm and watch God do his work of salvation for you today. God will fight the battle for you.

**More to Life Sermon by Major Judith Barrow**

Scripture: Philippians 3:20, 21

INTRODUCTION

One of the problems of life today for many people is that they have no direction. Many are like Alice in Wonderland, who asked the Cheshire Cat: “Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?”

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the cat. “I don’t much care where,” said Alice. “Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the cat.

The truth is, it matters a whole lot where all of us are going. As Christians, we live and die, hope and suffer, achieve and fail with a lasting, and obvious joy because we see something greater. We’re the only ones who can fully realize that this life is a gift from the hand of our Father. True enjoyment of life present and eternal is ours in Jesus Christ.

We read earlier in Philippians 3:20 that we are citizens of high heaven. When someone leaves one country to become a citizen in another, there’s a process they have to go through. When it comes to our citizenship in Heaven, Jesus Christ has already gone through the necessary process by dying for us on Calvary. By the oath and covenant of His blood. He has earned this privilege for us. So we’re no longer alienated; we are sons and daughters of God. As Christians we’re different from non-Christians who belong to just the kingdom of this world. “There’s far more to life for us.”

I. CITIZENS OF HIGH HEAVEN! (vs. 20)

a. A Colony of Heavenly Citizens

We read in Hebrews 11:10, NLT: "Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God." Paul says in our text, “We’re citizens of high heaven!

Warren Weirsbe says that this “word ‘citizen’ is where we get the English word ‘politics.’ It has to do with one’s behavior as a citizen of a nation. Paul is encouraging us to have the spiritual mind, and he does this by pointing out the characteristics of the Christian whose citizenship is in heaven. Just as Philippi was a colony of Rome on foreign soil, so the church is a ‘colony of heaven’ on earth” (Wiersbe, Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 2, 92).

In Acts 16, in Paul’s second missionary journey, we read: "Putting out from the harbor at Troas, we made a straight run for Samothrace. The next day we tied up at New City and walked from there to Philippi, the main city in that part of Macedonia and, even more importantly, a Roman colony. . ."

A Roman colony was made by at least three hundred Roman citizens, mostly veterans of the Roman legion. They went out from Rome, usually with a pension, after they’d fought in wars. They would go out to places given to them by the Caesar all around the Roman Empire, and build a model of Rome, a copy of the great capital city.

The people living in these colonies were proud to be Roman citizens. So it had great meaning for them when Paul wrote to them: "For our citizenship, is in heaven" Philippians 3:20.

William Barclay’s paraphrase of this verse says: "We have our home in heaven, and here on earth we are a colony of heaven's citizens." Paul is saying: "Just as the Roman colonists never forgot that they belong to Rome, you must never forget that you are citizens of heaven; and your conduct must match your citizenship."

b. Conducting Ourselves Like Believers

As God’s people and citizens of heaven, God expects us to be different. Jesus said when he stood on trial before Pilate in John 18:36: "My kingdom is not of this world". Not long before that He said to His disciples in John 14:2-3: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also".

Our hearts by faith in Jesus Christ are settled in Heaven. That doesn’t mean that we are not identified with this world too – we still experience everything that has to do with our life on earth; the fear and danger of war; disease; famine; cold and heat; the laws of the land; the influence of people and things around us. We don’t close our eyes and pretend we’re not here; we make a decision to live differently in our short span of life. We try to influence others for God and pray that He will convict them by His Holy Spirit, to turn their hearts to Him. But our home and our future are not here. They’re where Jesus is – in Heaven. And by the grace of God we live like we believe that.

Having our citizenship in heaven causes us to be the opposite of those Paul warns about in verse 19 whose god is their appetite, whose glory is their shame, and who set their minds on earthly things that are passing away. A mind set on heavenly things looks for all that is related to heaven including the glory of our returning Lord and all that means for us. We seek and find eternal satisfaction in our God instead of the fleeting pleasures of our appetites.

Paul says: 7-9 (The Message) “The very credentials these people are waving around as something special, I’m tearing up and throwing out with the trash—along with everything else I used to take credit for. And why? Because of Christ. Yes, all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant—dog dung. I’ve dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced by him. I didn’t want some petty, inferior brand of righteousness that comes from keeping a list of rules when I could get the robust kind that comes from trusting Christ—God’s righteousness. But there are some great and wonderful things that belong to us, and that characterize us, we who are children of the King, citizens of heaven, whose commonwealth is in glory.”

People who don’t have a relationship with Christ might put all their hopes on shifting things of earth, but not we who belong to Him. There’s more to life for us. Our set of laws is a different one than the world follows. It was given by Jesus in Matthew 5:17-48.

We are not to live in this world as though we belonged. We’re pilgrims here. God does not intend for us to live like this life is all there is. We’re not to grasp things here as though they were forever ours.

c. Conveyed into His Kingdom.

As Christians, we are never to regard this earth as our permanent dwelling place. Hebrews 11:14-16 refers to the old saints who died with their faith in the Lord: “Each one of these people of faith died not yet having in hand what was promised, but still believing. How did they do it? They saw it way off in the distance, waved their greeting, and accepted the fact that they were transients in this world. People who live this way make it plain that they are looking for their true home. If they were homesick for the old country, they could have gone back any time they wanted. But they were after a far better country than that—heaven country. You can see why God is so proud of them, and has a City waiting for them.”

These saints are in heaven now, home in glory, with many more, who died with their faith in the same Lord. Some of them were very close to us and we miss them, but everything and everyone we love on this earth is fleeting, just like we are. But our hope and lasting home is in glory. We belong to a glorious kingdom now that we’ve inherited already – it’s not future –. Paul writes in Colossians 1:12-13: “12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”

This verse says the Father has qualified us; He has delivered us from the power of darkness – and He has conveyed us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love. We’re already enrolled by the blood of Jesus as citizens of a kingdom that is yet to come.

Yes, we’re living here for now, but our real home is in heaven. We have family here, but our real family is in Heaven.

We have fellowship here, broken and fading away, but our real fellowship is in heaven. We have a body here, a house made of dust and clay that ages, and suffers all the pain and trouble of this world, but 2 Corinthians 5:1 tells us that our real house is made without hands, eternal in the heavens.

Our names are known in Heaven. They’re all recorded in one book, along with every person who has ever trusted Jesus as Savior. In Revelation 21:27 this book is called the Lamb’s Book of Life, and no one whose name is not written there will enter Heaven: “Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” We belong there, not here.

That’s why Paul dumped in the trash all the things that he used to think were important before he met Jesus Christ.

II. WAITING FOR HIS COMING (vs. 20)

“We’re waiting the arrival of the Savior, the Master, Jesus Christ, who will transform our earthy bodies into glorious bodies like his own.”

Does it get any better than that?

a. Alive in the Promise

We read in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (The Message): “We can tell you with complete confidence—we have the Master’s word on it—that when the Master comes again to get us, those of us who are still alive will not get a jump on the dead and leave them behind. In actual fact, they’ll be ahead of us. The Master himself will give the command. Archangel thunder! God’s trumpet blast! He’ll come down from heaven and the dead in Christ will rise—they’ll go first. Then the rest of us who are still alive at the time will be caught up with them into the clouds to meet the Master. Oh, we’ll be walking on air! And then there will be one huge family reunion with the Master. So reassure one another with these words.”

What a glorious hope! Jesus’ return is the pivotal event of the future, but Paul stresses here that it is the person that we are eagerly waiting for. The event itself and its consequences are secondary.

Jesus Himself already promised His disciples that He would return in John 14:2-3: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." We have Jesus’ own word on it!

Donald MacLeod, in his book: “A Faith to Live By”, Christian Focus, Fearn, 1998, p.262) says this: “Jesus is coming back in person to this world he came to as a baby in. He is personally returning to this world which he once visited personally two thousand years ago. But this time his return will be in glory. The first advent was a real presence, but it was in lowliness and humiliation. He came in obscurity, incognito. He came in hiddenness, in anonymity. He came into poverty, homelessness, oppression, lowliness and weakness. He came into pain, shame, dishonor, rejection, death on the cross. He came as the great Nobody, the one who looked just like any man, utterly human, a servant. “But when he returns he will return in the glory of the blessed God. He will look like he is. He will look like the world’s Savior. He will look like God. He will come with the doxa, the form, the splendor, the majesty, of God himself. He will come in all the paraphernalia of deity. He will come in the form that he had for a moment on the Mount of Transfiguration. He will come in the kind of glory with which Jehovah came to Mount Sinai in the days of Moses. He will come in the splendor with which Isaiah saw him in Isaiah 6.”

b. Anxious to Receive Him.

As heavenly citizens we should be eager for Jesus’ return. The phrase “eagerly wait” speaks of zealous anticipation. In Greek, this word has the idea of a child standing on tiptoe waiting for his daddy to come home from work at the end of the day. As believers in Jesus, we should have this same type of childish excitement about the second coming of Jesus. Like Paul, we should have a radical fixation on Christ’s return. Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 4:8 that if we love Christ’s appearing, He will one day reward us with the crown of righteousness.

III. TRANSFORMED BY HIS POWER. (vs. 21)

“He’ll make us beautiful and whole with the same powerful skill by which he is putting everything as it should be, under and around him.”

a. Changed for Heaven.

He will transform our lowly bodies: Our earthly bodies are brought low by disease, old age, accidents, etc. But one glorious day the bodies of those who are in Christ are going to be gloriously transformed, and “be like Christ’s glorious body” (v.21). this body will be like Jesus’ body when He ascended into glory; like the one Paul saw on the Road to Damascus; like Jesus’ body when He was Transfigured; like the glorious sight John saw on the Isle of Patmos; bright and shining, displaying all the glory of God, fitted for Heaven and for serving the Lord for eternity.

b. Charged by the Holy Spirit.

Paul says in I Corinthians 15:35-43: “But someone will say, “How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?” 36 Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. 37 And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. 38 But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body. 39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind [a]of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds. 40 There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.”

And the all-powerful Lord of Creation will do this by His Holy Spirit as verse 21 tells us: “by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control”. This is the hope that we have for the future.

CONCLUSION: Knowing all this should have a profound effect on how we live on this earth. It should stir us to live for Christ and to set our earthly goals on heavenly gains. That’s what Paul is saying here – we have so much to live for – so much to live out when we think that we are to be imitators of Christ by the power of His Holy Spirit, so that others will be drawn to Him through our lives.

1 Peter 2:11 says: “Friends, this world is not your home, so don’t make yourselves cozy in it. Don’t indulge your ego at the expense of your soul. Live an exemplary life among the natives so that your actions will refute their prejudices. Then they’ll be won over to God’s side and be there to join in the celebration when he arrives.”

At the foot of one of the Swiss Alps is a marker honoring a man who fell to his death while attempting to climb to the top. The marker gives his name and then this brief epitaph “He died climbing.” This should be the epitaph of every Christian. We should be able to say with confidence as we slip from this world into the next that “we died climbing” experiencing the joy of living for Jesus now with the hope of Heaven in our hearts, looking forward as God’s children to that day when He will take us to be with Him in glory.