

TODAY’S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader / Opening Prayer by: Craig Girard
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Bobby Rader

#611 Heavenly Sunlight
#574 O, How I Love Jesus

Scripture Reading by: Matthew Girard
Oft We Come Together

Communion Devotional by: Don Lynn
Lord’s Supper and Contribution

#162 All hail the Power of Jesus Name
Sermon: “You Don’t Know”
Ecclesiastes 11:1-6

Is Thy Heart Right With God?
#453 Love Lifted Me
Closing Prayer by: Zach Arthur

Our Small Groups will meet tonight.
Don Taylor’s group will meet tonight at
the building at 5:00 p.m.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

Oct. 15, 2023

“Stand Firm in...Liberty”

Galatians 5:1

Will We Know Each Other in Heaven: Objection

Last week, we considered a question many people have asked over the years: will we know each other in heaven? While Scripture does not address this directly, it seems clear that the answer to that is affirmative, both from the great principles of the Bible as well as implications of passages found in both the Old and New Testaments. But there are some objections that have been raised to that idea before; let’s consider those here.

Sometimes it’s suggested we know each other only based on physical features. Some mistakenly argue, then, that we cannot possibly know each other, because we are spirit. We have already covered this: we know resurrection is embodied existence; while it might not be physical in precisely the sense that we understand here and now, it will not be disembodied.

But then, some might say, that condition applies only to life after the resurrection—then we will have bodies that make recognition possible, sure—but that does not have any bearing on whether those disembodied spirits now in the afterlife know each other. There are a number of responses to that. First, most of these passages we noted last week actually have to do with that intermediate state: all of those from the OT, for instance, as well as the Transfiguration. Further, we established clearly that identity is not, in fact, attached to your body. Remember: God is spirit, yet he has personality and identity. Will we be unable to know him? Obviously not! The examples of Elijah and Moses at the Transfiguration stand out here, too. Beyond all that—is it true that we only recognize others due to their physical traits? How would David, for instance, know his infant son, who died immediately after birth? What about those with physical imperfections? What “age” will our bodies be? We are getting into the realm of the unknowable here; the point is that while, yes, there is continuity with the present, there are also radical differences. I do not claim to know *how* we will recognize one another; I do know it does not depend on particular physical traits.

A second objection has to do with the severing of earthly ties in heaven. Some will point to **Matthew 22:23-33**, where a group of Sadducees come to test Jesus with a convoluted question about a woman who married seven brothers in succession—*whose wife will she be in the resurrection?* Jesus responded to them that their question was based on a misconception to begin with, *For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.* Doesn’t this mean earthly relationships will have no meaning? If so, then any recognition we would have would be pointless. We have already clearly seen from several passages that there is a certainty of future reunion that cuts against that idea. Strictly speaking, all this passage indicates is that there will be no marriage relationships in the resurrection; it does not teach that all relationships will be dissolved.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

David Warren had surgery last week and is at home.

Sammie Minchew had surgery last week.

Continued Prayers

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stiflemire, Donna Wilson, Patricia Prater, Edna Semien, Wilson Semien, Betty Spencer, Willie Spencer, James Wilson, Jo Ella McKewen, Kelly McCain, Wayne Noonkester

Shut Ins

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique, Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meeting Monday, Oct. 15th at 5:30 p.m.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, Oct. 19th at 8:00 a.m.

Homecoming is Sunday, Oct. 22nd. The meal will be catered and we will need to provide desserts.

Baby Shower for Kora Ward on Sunday, Nov. 5th. More information to follow.

Thank You

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Thank you for your thoughts and prayers during my recent surgery. I am doing better.

David Warren

But by far the biggest question, a question that I have heard people ask as a follow-up: how can I be happy if my loved ones are not there? If we know one another—and I know, as a result, that some I knew and loved are not present—how could you truly be content under those circumstances? We are again to the realm of the unknowable here. It has to do both with what the nature of eternity is like, both in terms of life with God and separation from him in hell. And there are several ways that we can address this issue.

I think much of our difficulty here has to do with the idea of eternal torment; but we might know even less about what hell is like that we do about heaven! It is described as a place of both fire and darkness; obviously those are not literal any more than the pearly gates are. Hell is the absence of God...whatever that means. As C.S. Lewis said, it is him saying to those who reject him, *They will by done*.

But it is also even more frequently described as a place of death and destruction. Here, some thinkers have offered some different ways to understand that. For instance, could it be that hell is not perpetual, conscious torment, but that God grants eternal life only to those in Christ? That the rest will simply not be given that gift, but cease to exist (“eternal destruction” meaning that they are finally, utterly annihilated)? Some have made a biblical case for that. Another possibility, suggested by N.T. Wright, is that those who continue to reject God at last become, after death, beings that were once human but no longer are. By their own choice, they have rejected the divine image, and so pass not only beyond hope, but beyond pity. I am not endorsing any of these views specifically; I think that they are interesting possibilities to think about, and they are grounded in Scripture (and far beyond the scope of this article to spell out in more detail). My only point is that we don’t understand much of anything about hell. I absolutely believe it is real. I believe those who reject God go there. But it could be that, by its very nature, we will not miss those there.

There are other ways to answer this objection that have more to do with the nature of eternal life. Do we think that our earthly affections supersede those of the Creator? In other words: do we really believe that God loves the world? Do we really believe that he wants all to be saved? Of course! *For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom 5:7-8)*. Well do we really not think, then, that Jesus would miss those who rejected him? Have we never considered that he would miss those like the Rich Young Ruler? Or Judas? But would anyone describe God as unhappy? If God can be happy despite knowing some are lost, we can be too.

Perhaps the answer is that all ties not in Christ will lose their meaning. Jesus at least points in that direction (**Mt 12:46-50; 10:37**): those who follow him are his true family. More to the point, God promises he will wipe away all tears; there will be no more sorrow there. Don’t you think he has the power to take away the pain of those lost, while maintaining the knowledge of those saved? I do not know how that works. But I trust he will, somehow

There is good reason, therefore, to believe that we shall know one another after this life. And that should serve as a powerful motivating force: to live our lives pleasing to him, and to try and take those whom we love with us by encouraging them to do likewise.

Bryant Perkins

“Stand Firm in...Liberty”

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