

Back in March 1991, Eric Clapton’s 4-year-old son’s life was tragically cut short when he fell to his death from his mother's 53rd-floor Manhattan apartment in March 1991. According to accounts of the day, the four-year-old jumped from a window that a janitor had left open. The tragic event spurred Eric to write the hit song Tears in Heaven. The song was Eric's best-selling single in the US, reaching number two on Billboard and in the Top 10 in more than 20 countries worldwide.

Eric described his son as "the one thing in my life that good could come out of". Clapton in this song wrote about his 4-year-old son who died in a tragic accident, and posed some questions about heaven…

Would you know my name

If I saw you in heaven?

Would it be the same

If I saw you in heaven?

Would you hold my hand

If I saw you in heaven?

Would you help me stand

If I saw you in heaven?

And one of the closing parts of the song Clapton writes…

Beyond the door there’s peace I’m sure

And I know there’ll be NO MORE TEARS in heaven.

Clapton inserted a truth that we find in scripture…that tears, pain, hurt, anger, malice, rudeness, anxiety, and grief will be gone. In the Old and New Testaments, we find this promise:

Isaiah 65:19

I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.

Revelation 21:4

‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

In Clapton’s song, he started asking questions that are similar to what most of us ask:

What is heaven like?

Will I see my animal pets in heaven?

Will I have a place to live in heaven?

Will the people I know recognize me?

What will I do there?

Will all my loved ones be there?

What would I look like?

We are going to confirm the truth and dispel myths about the afterlife using God’s Word.

John 14:1-7 )NIV)

1“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God[a]; believe also in me. 2 My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going.”

5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?

6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really know me, you will know[b] my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

**JESUS IS PREPARING A PLACE**

This passage took place hours before His trials and crucifixion. Jesus is trying to comfort his disciples. To be more precise, the institution of the Lord’s Supper has taken place, Judas just left the room after being identified as the betrayer, and Peter was told he will deny Jesus three times. The first thing we get from Jesus in this text is the command: “DON’T WORRY. Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

Jesus is also telling us not to worry about the next life. How many of you spend time worrying about the next life? …be honest!  Or if you don’t worry, how many of you at the very least feel a bit anxious about what happens after this?

Jesus is saying here, “I’VE GOT THIS!  DON’T WORRY ABOUT IT! It’s going to be great! I’m in charge of preparing your place!”

**JESUS IS COMING BACK**

Another idea that we can draw from Jesus' words is that we can trust in the promise: “I’m coming back…” Jesus mentioned several times his promise to return in John 14:18 and John 21. We have to trust in the promise that Jesus is coming back.

Some people have wandered away from the faith because they have gotten tired of waiting. In our fast-paced society, in our selfie and short-attention-span generation, and the we-want-it-right-now mentality, we have so many walking away from the church because it just doesn’t work. “Why would he say he’s coming back and then wait over 2000 years and counting?” Unfortunately, the only one that has the answer to that question doesn’t owe us an answer. and as in all things, GOD’s time is not our time…and HE will send Jesus back in HIS TIME.

**HEAVEN IS AN ACTUAL PLACE**

The next idea that we can pull from this text is that heaven is an actual place as written in Revelation 21 and  22.  “…that you also may be where I am.”

Imagine what kind of place is going to be waiting for us, a place that Jesus has been working on for over 2000 years, focusing on details, using all of His creativity and unlimited power to create a place for us to come and be where He is!

The Book of Revelation 21 and 22 give us John’s revelation from Christ of what heaven will look like. Keep in mind, that the imagery was revealed in a vision. John communicated this vision with his limited understanding and knowledge of God.  It is going to be something that will redefine shock and awe.

**HEAVEN MEANS WE ARE PRESENT WITH JESUS**

Our presence in heaven means we are present with Jesus “…to take you to be with me…”

This is the most significant promise in the text by far…Jesus tells the disciples…and that promise flows through to us…that the place that he has prepared…is WITH HIM. We get to be in the presence of Jesus Christ…we get to see him face to face…we get to talk to him, ask him questions, hear his voice…look into the eyes of the guy that died for us.

Consider what Paul wrote to the Corinthians and Philippians:

2 Corinthians 5:8 (NIV)

8 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Philippians 1:21-23 (NIV)

 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

Paul got it that while living his life out was necessary to continue to spread the gospel,  his heart, his desire, his mind, and his life were set on a one-way path to heaven. I think that is a key idea for us to understand today. Our mindset needs to be like Paul’s. our hearts and minds should be focused on the prize which is getting to be with Jesus.  We shouldn’t cling so tightly to life and fight death tooth and nail.  Not that any of us should hang out and wait for Jesus to come and get us, but we should not grieve leaving this world and heading to the next because it will far exceed anything we can even think of or imagine.  And we will get to be with Jesus.

Here’s our main point for today: “We must not fear or be anxious! Anything that Jesus is preparing for us is indescribably amazing compared to this world! If we truly know Jesus – if he is our Lord and Savior – if we trust in the truth that he is the son of God who was sent as a sacrifice for the redemption of humanity and redemption of the world, then we have no reason to worry. We have no reason to doubt that Heaven is going to be everything we know about it from God’s Word – and much, much more. What God doesn’t want us to do is speculate, or make things up. He especially doesn’t want us to have anxiety or worry about what is to come.

JESUS has promised that it will be a place of peace, a place of tranquility, a place with no more tears, a place – a real physical place – where we will be with Jesus. Not only will we be in His Kingdom but there will be a special place created there just for us as well. With that place assured by our faith in the sacrifice, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we have nothing to fear, nothing to worry about. IT should free us to rejoice and desire nothing more than to live every day we have to prepare for and tell others about the Kingdom of Heaven!

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

1) How did the message encourage/challenge you today?

2) What are you looking forward to most in heaven?

3) Do you have any worries about heaven? Share with your group.