

The Father's House – Sunday September 2nd 2012.

“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.” John 14:1-6

Beloved in the Lord,

Today's Scripture is probably quite familiar to most of us. We hear these words read out at almost, if not every funeral service. Jesus is teaching us that in His Father's House there are many rooms or dwelling places. There is room for every sinner who turns to Jesus and confesses Him as Lord and Saviour.

The Father's House is our real home. Here in this world we are just passing through. This is not our home. We do not have an abiding place here, but we seek one that is to come. Here we live but a short time. Life is fleeting. Here we live for a few years, but there we will live forever. Here we experience bad and hurtful things, we suffer from sickness, we have hardships and heartaches, but over there, every tear will be wiped from our eyes. No more sickness, no more pain, no more death. Here we live by faith, there we will see our Lord face to face. Here our understanding is limited and clouded, there we will see and know fully. Here we battle with the devil and sin, there the devil will be no more – sin and death and the devil will be in the lake of fire for ever. Hallelujah.

It is interesting that we like to reminisce. We recollect our past. We like to remember our childhood, our family home, our homeland, especially if we had a happy childhood. It is nice to do so, but in order to move ahead we cannot forever dwell in the past. It is much more important to look forward to what is yet to come.

Paul wrote to the Philippians: ***“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” Phil.3:7-11.***

Paul is telling us that he is living his life in the hope of attaining to the resurrection of the dead. He is not looking back, but forward, He knew that what has been has past. He knew

that everything was dependent upon faith in Jesus Christ, and not on anything that he had or had not done.

He continues:

“Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.¹³ Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. “(Phil.3:12-14)

Clearly Paul’s focus was Heavenward. He was keeping his Father’s house in focus. He was spending his energy on staying in the faith and along the way, he laboured to bring Christ to as many as he possibly could.

Jesus died on the cross, He shed His innocent blood for our sin, in order that we may spend eternity with Him in The Father’s House.

Jesus said: ***“that where I am, there you may be also.” (Jn.14:3b)***

The good news is: ***“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)***

We need to understand that all people will live forever. The question is not eternity, it is where will we spend it? There are only two possibilities: Either we will live in The Father’s House with Jesus or we will be in the outer darkness. We will live in perfect fellowship with God or we will be in solitary confinement in hell. There are no other options.

God desires for all to be with Him. Jesus blood has paid the atonement price for the sins of all men. However, only those who by faith appropriate His sacrifice, will live in the Father’s House. Those who reject Jesus here will be rejected over there.

When we entrust our salvation, our eternity to Jesus, when we understand in faith that His blood has paid for our sins, then our place in The Father’s House is eternally secure. We can say along with the Apostle Paul:

“ For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.² For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,³ inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.⁴ For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.⁵ Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.

⁶Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight—⁸we are of good

courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. " 2 Cor.5:1-8

A person whose heart is surrendered in faith to The Lord Jesus Christ, can never feel totally at ease in this world. He can never feel at home, because he is not. His home is Heaven.

We eagerly await the day, we live in hope, we live with an earnest expectation for the moment when we shall see Jesus face to face. Until that day, He has given us His Holy Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come. The Holy Spirit is our helper who upholds us and encourages us in the faith.

Knowing that this is not our home, knowing that we have a place in The Father's House, how should we live this life?

Paul answers that for us in the ninth verse of 2 Corinthians 5: ***"Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him."***

I think that we all understand what is meant by family honour – the family name or reputation. When we do something immoral or sinful or stupid, we not only tarnish our own reputation, but often also that of our family.

As God's children, we need to live such a life so as not to tarnish the family name. Not to ever bring dishonour to God's name. We need to live a life that brings glory and honour to God's name. That is how Jesus lived. When Phillip said to Jesus: "Show us the Father", Jesus replied: "He who has seen me, has seen The Father." Jesus prayer was "Father, glorify Your name."

That should also be our daily prayer – "Father glorify Your Name in and through me. May my life reflect You; may it reflect the truth that I am Yours through Jesus. May my life reflect the fact that my citizenship is in Heaven, I have a room in Your House forever. May all I say and do reflect Your love."

That is a prayer that our Father will answer positively every time. That makes Him happy, because we are seeking His glory. He is happy when His children live in love and peace and harmony. When His children reflect His love and His glory and His power. He is glorified when we live in such a way that shows that we know that we are His creation, living out His will. Remember last Sunday we considered what Paul wrote to the Ephesians: ***"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."*** Ephesians 2:10

When we live in faith, then our lives are in sync with God and His Word. When we are led by The Holy Spirit, then we live life as God intended and that brings glory to His name. This in turn brings blessings upon not only us, but upon all whom we meet.

There is nothing greater than to live life by faith, walking in The Holy Spirit. When you do you are free. You are free to live and free to die. Death is simply the path to our Father's House – it is a Home Coming.

Paul wrote:

“ For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; ⁸ for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.” (Romans 14:7-8)

Amen

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.