

## Open with Prayer and Condolences to Family

*Listen to the words of Jesus recorded for us in John 14 beginning in verse 1. He says:*

*John 14:1-6 (KJV) 14 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

*<sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. <sup>5</sup> Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? <sup>6</sup> Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

- In these short verses Jesus tells us some very comforting and amazing things that are so relevant when we face the passing of a loved one and they all are about heaven.

### Our Weird Views of Heaven:

- When we think about heaven often times our thoughts are amusing.
  - ❖ We think that when we get to heaven we are going to have wings and become angels.
  - ❖ We think that we are going to be transformed into chubby little cherubs that play the harp (and to me that's not that wonderful of a thought because I thought we all get svelt bodies in heaven and that we don't have to worry about chubby anymore)
  - ❖ Or we think that we are going to be dressed in pure white (which of course no body other than Jennifer Hudson can pull off and only after weight watchers), but nevertheless we think we will wear these long white choir robes and be a part of a never ending church service.
    - As a pastor I know first hand that, that's a horror for some people who start staring at their watches just 30 minutes into an earthly church service.
  - ❖ If you grew up in my generation you think that God looks like George Burns and smokes a cigar and if you grew up in this generation than he looks like Morgan Friedman and has a really great voice.

*That's Why Jesus Gives Us John 14:1-6:*

- When we think about heaven most of us have some pretty funny, pretty strange views.
- And it's with that in mind that Jesus gives us these words in John 14 which in many ways stand in stark contrast to our thoughts about heaven.
- So, let's look together at just a couple of things Jesus tells us about heaven that can comfort our hearts and give us hope for our lives.

## 1. Heaven is a real place

- It's not a state of mind.
- It's not a figment of our imagination.
- It's not some disembodied condition where we just float around without a body after we die.
- It's not nirvana.
- It's not nothingness.
- It's not a dream like state.
- It's not something intangible or ethereal.
- It's not a feeling.
- It's not made up by the feeble minded.
- Notice again the word of Jesus, he said "I go to prepare a place for you!"
- Heaven is a real place.

*Well what's it like?*

## 2. It's a place beyond our wildest imagination

*Disney:*

*When our children were little, Lisa and I decided to take them to Disney in Orlando for the first time. And in the weeks and months leading up to it, we tried to explain to them what it's like. We tried to paint a picture with our words of what Main Street USA is like and what it's like to stand at one end of that street and look straight down and see Cinderella's Castle. And the kids did show some excitement. You could see their imaginations beginning to run wild.*

*But, when we actually arrived and we literally walked through the gates of Disney and they got to see for themselves what we tried to explain and what they tried to conceive in the imagination, suddenly they got it. Their eyes opened up like giant saucers and their mouths dropped – it was beyond their wildest imagination.*

- In another place in scripture the Bible tells us "***no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind can conceive what God has prepared for those who love him.***"

- ❖ Heaven is a real place that is beyond our wildest imagination.

**Name of Person Who Passed On Eyes Lit Up Like Saucers:**

- And just a few short days ago I can assure you that \_\_\_\_\_'s eyes opened up like a kid seeing Disney for the first time and he said to Jesus – this is the place you prepared for me, it's beyond my wildest imagination.
- It's better than I ever thought it was.
- And I can hear Jesus saying – I had you in mind when I created it. It's a place prepared for you!

**3. What's it like – it's a place of no more!**

- In speaking of heaven scripture tells us in Rev 21 beginning in verse 4:

***“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying and there shall be no more pain for the former things have passed away.”***

***Heaven is a place of no more.***

- Think about what bothers you, and what hurts and in your heart say – no more.
- Think about your back aches, your arthritis, your high blood pressure, your diabetes, your cancer and in your heart say – no more.
- Think about your worries, your fears, your stress and in your heart say no more.
- Think about whatever ails you or pains you and in your hearts no that there is a place of no more.
  - That's what heaven's like.
- No more poverty, no more disease, no more genocide, no more aids, no more hate, no more hunger – no more.
- That's heaven.
- ❖ Can you see why Jesus said, “Don't let your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. 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!”

- Heaven is a real place.
- Heaven is a place beyond our wildest imaginations.

- Heaven is a place of no more.

*And lastly...*

#### 4. Heaven is a place where Jesus is.

- Once again take note of Christ's words, "he says – *that where I am you may be also.*"

***Jesus, Makes Heaven Heaven!***

- Some people talk about the streets of gold and say that's what makes heaven, heaven.
- Some people talk about the mansions and say that's what makes heaven, heaven.
- Some people talk about the crystal sea and say that's what makes heaven, heaven.
- But for me what makes heaven, heaven is that's where Jesus is.

***Tell the Story of Fanny Crosby:***

- You may not know who she is, but Fanny is known as America's hymn queen.
- She wrote over 10,000 hymns which are sung weekly in America's churches – perhaps most well known is Blessed Assurance Jesus is mine, oh what a fortaste of glory divine.
- Her hymns brought her before Senators, heads of state, world leaders and Presidents.
- But Fanny's story is not as glamorous as it may seem.
  - Just a baby
  - Eye infection
  - Charliton Dr
  - Hot mustard compresses
  - Burned out both Cornia and blind for the rest of her life.
  - It was after the blindness that with the help and encouragement of her parents, her faith, and her overcomers attitude that she wrote all those hymns and became famous.

***Conversation with the Pastor...***

- "If at Birth I could have asked God for one thing it would be that he would create me blind at birth."
  - "Why said the Pastor?"
  - Because when I die and go to heaven the first face that I will see is that of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!"
- Fanny knew that what made heaven, heaven is Jesus is there!

***Personalize for Person Who Passed On:***

- Some of what heaven has in store for us is a mystery and will remain so until we pass on from this life, but one thing I can tell is that when \_\_\_\_\_ closed his eyes on this side of eternity and opened them up on the other side the first face that greeted him was that of Jesus Christ!
- And to \_\_\_\_\_ everything else grew strangely dim.

***There is an hymn called Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus and it says:***

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.*

- Be of good cheer, \_\_\_\_\_ is looking on the face of Jesus in the greatest place there is – Heaven!