

What will we do in Heaven?
Part 1

What does it mean to be an heir?

11/7/10

Today, we begin a new series of messages on our Eternal Home – Heaven. For a few weeks we are going to turn our attention to what does the Bible say about what will we be doing in Heaven.

Before we can actually dive into the actions words that describe what we will be doing, we first need to understand some important principles about... What does it mean to be an heir.

An important definition:

“Heir”:
1. one who inherits or is entitled to inherit property
2. one who inherits or is entitled to succeed to a rank, title, or office
- to the throne

1. When I became a Christian, I became
A. an heir of God

“Now if we are children, then we are heirs...” Rom 8:17a

“so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.” Titus 3:7

“The blameless spend their days under the LORD’s care, and their *inheritance* will endure forever.” Ps 37:18

B. a joint heir with Christ.

“Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” Romans 8:17

Conversely, it is important to understand that those who have not accepted Christ as their Savior are not Christians.

John Eldridge writes:

“The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Then he sent some more servants and said, “Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner . . . Come to the wedding banquet.” But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. (Matthew 22:2-5)

Now for a sobering truth, more sobering than any other we have considered.

To be honest, we must understand that not everyone lives happily ever after, not in any tale. This promise of the happy ending-or the new beginning-is only for the friends of God. Many people do not want the life that God offers them.

Remember-he gave us free will.

He gave us a choice.

We seem to forget—perhaps more truthfully, we refuse to remember—that we are the ones who betrayed him, not vice versa. We are the ones who listened to the lies of the Evil One in the Garden; we chose to mistrust the heart of God. In breaking the one command he gave us, we set in motion a life of breaking his commands. (You have loved God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? You have loved your neighbor as yourself?)

The final act of self-centeredness is seen in those who refuse to come to the wedding banquet of God (Matthew 22:2-3). They do not want God. They reject his offer of forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus. What is he to do? The universe has only two options. If they insist, God will grant to them what they

have wanted-to be left to themselves.

To be rescued from an eternity apart from God-this is why the rescued ones fall before him at the Great Feast in songs of gratitude and worship. Yes, we will worship God. It won't be like a church service, but we will worship him. We will adore him.

But that day has not yet come.

Until then, the invitation of life stands.

I have set before you life and death . . . Now choose life.
(Deuteronomy 30:19)

2. Everything the Father has belongs to the Son . . . and to us.

“But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.” Heb 1:2

“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” Romans 8:32

If this idea seems a bit presumptuous to you, I would have to agree – IF IT WERE OUR IDEA – but it is not our idea, it is God's idea.

The story of the prodigal son

Character # 1 was the jerk of a son who decided he wanted his inheritance early so that he could run off to a foreign country and waste it on drugs, whores and parties. When the money had dried up - he ends up eating pig food and decides he better make amends with his Father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

We tend to see what we are looking for. Notice that it was not the son who saw the Father from “a long way off” . . . it was the Father who saw the son. I would imagine, that everyday, since his son left, the Father looked over that horizon longing for his son to return.

“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

There you have it - The great speech that the son had written and rehearsed. It came off without a hitch - Exactly as he had planned it and notice his Father's reaction. It is as if the Father didn't hear a single word he said.

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.” Luke 15:20-24

Character # 2 was the loser of a son who got mad at Dad for killing the fatted calf and throwing a party for his wayward brother who had returned home. This boy had been faithful and hard working to his father. Staying home and working the fields and doing what his father had said and now he is mad because his dad is welcoming home his derelict brother.

“‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, *and everything I have is yours*. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’” Luke 15:31-32

Characters # 1 and 2, are a lot like the people that I know. In fact, they are probably a lot like me.

Character # 3 – The Father was the star of this show. In fact, I would suggest that the story has the wrong title. This story is not

the story of the Jerk son or the Loser son. This is the story of the Fathers love for us – the ones who have messed up, made mistakes and generally made poor choices and to us, the Father says, “Everything I have is yours.”

3. We will be allowed to sit with Him on his throne and rule

Being an heir, entitles us to an inheritance of possessions but the second definition we learned also show us that we will inherit a “throne” or authority, power, a right to rule.

“To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.” Rev 3:21

“To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations.” Rev 2:26

“You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.” Rev 5:9-10

What would you think of a man who is traveling by car to a law office downtown, where he is scheduled to hear the reading of the last will and testament of his billionaire father, of which he is one of a handful of heirs, but his car breaks down and he is forced to walk the remaining 5 miles.

It is hot. Then it is cold. He gets tired. He gets sick. Someone robs him at some point of his money and later someone else lies to him and says really mean things about him. He gets a cell phone call that his best friend has died. He is hungry but now he has no money. He is angry, sad and very alone and in a rough neighborhood.

What would you say to this man?

Keep going you are almost there!

Everything is about to change.

Quit your whining, man. You cannot possibly compare what is happening to you now with what you are about to receive.

This is an exact picture of our lives. We as believers are headed to a mind boggling inheritance from our, very much alive, Heavenly Father but to get there you are gonna have to walk through a very difficult neighborhood called “life”. Whatever you do, not forget for one minute what is waiting for you.

“In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

1 Peter 5:6-7