My Heavenly Home – A Place for (Even) Me
November 9, 2025

The last 4 weeks our sermons have been focused on our heavenly home. (If you happened to miss any of them, you can watch them on the St. John Facebook page) Today we continue that sermon series by reflecting on how our heavenly home is a place where we don't belong, but amazingly we get to go there anyway, because of Jesus. And this is a fitting topic to discuss this morning. On the church year calendar, today is known as "Last Judgment Sunday." It's a Sunday when we begin to wrap up the church year by focusing on the things to come Christ's return and the final judgment, the triumph of all believers in Jesus in heaven, and the glory of our risen and ascended Savior in heaven. Because of our faith in Jesus, our Savior, our final judgment will turn out much differently than it should, and amazingly, astonishingly, wonderfully, we will find ourselves approved to be in heaven. Our sermon focus verses are words from our Gospel reading for the day. They are the words of Jesus. (John 14:1-3) "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house there are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 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." (Revelation 7:12) "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

What do you suppose will be the most remarkable thing about heaven? When we open our eyes and realize we're in heaven, what will we find the most astonishing thing? Will it be the splendor of heaven's appearance? Will it be the angels? The loved ones who greet us? The 100-part harmony sung by the believers gathered there? Or will it be the realization that all of our sinfulness and the difficulties of our past life are gone, completely and absolutely gone? Or as we will discuss in a few weeks, will it be that wonderful realization that we will never, ever have to say goodbye again? Perhaps many of us would answer that the most remarkable thing we expect to see in heaven will be the Three-in-One Lord in all his glory. Which is, of course, a great answer. In fact, there is no doubt that all of these things will be astounding, amazing, incredible. But there will probably be something else that we will find even more remarkable. The thing that we may find to be the most remarkable thing of all when we get to heaven is that we are there!

Let's be honest. We try to hide our secret sins from others and often do so successfully. We try to cover over those foolish mistakes we've made in our past. We try to always act appropriately in the presence of others. We're very glad that people can't read our minds or see us in our weakest moments. But we know, each and every single one of us knows, how rotten we are. We know our sins. We know our indiscretions. We know the sinful indulgences we allow ourselves. We know the hurtful things we have done, sometimes deliberately. We know the inappropriate words that have slipped out of our mouths. We know the shocking thoughts that have crossed our minds. We know better than anyone how very sinful we are. And we know that God knows how very sinful we are too, which is why perhaps the most shocking thing for us when we get to heaven, will be that we are there at all.

A father was greatly troubled about his grown son who had made some poor spiritual and moral decisions. The father was very concerned, and spent many an hour in prayer over his

son. One day the son wrote to his father with great trembling and fear, and asked whether there was any hope for him. The father immediately sent a reply to him, and the reply consisted of one word "Home," and it was signed "Father." The Gospel of Jesus Christ is God's letter to the sinful world, to you and me, horrible sinners that are. That gospel is summed up in one word, "Home," and it's signed by one name, "Father." And the motivation behind the earthly father's letter, and the Heavenly Father's letter is the same.

It is love. In love, God the Father sacrificed his own holy Son, Jesus. In love for his Father and for us, Jesus willingly offered himself to the horrors of death and hell. In love, God the Father and God the Son took action to rescue a fallen world, to rescue you and me. Are we horrible sinners? Absolutely! Is Jesus' atonement sufficient to remove our sin-stain? Without a doubt! Do we deserve to go to hell? Yes, we do! Did Jesus change our destination to heaven? Yes, he did! How? How did Jesus save us? By his death on the cross in our place. Why did he save us? Because he loved us and still does! And he wants you and me with him forever in heaven. And because of Jesus' love, he suffered and died in our place for our sins. That same love moved Jesus to speak the incredibly comforting words of our focus verses too. Jesus knew that his disciples would have to go through a horribly difficult time as they watched him die. Then after his resurrection, they would have to say goodbye to him yet again. So Jesus reassures them with these words. (John 14:1) "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me."

As people living in this world, the most troubling thing is not, can I pay the mortgage. Or will my health hold? Or what should I do about a certain situation in life? We have many, many concerns, and challenges, and frustrations, and difficulties. Work and school issues. Home issues. Relationship issues. Financial issues. Health issues. But none of those issues is the most troubling issue of all. None of those things is the most troubling matter, as troubling as any of them may be. The most troubling thing for rotten, wretched people like us is can I be forgiven? Can those horrible things I have done be removed from my record? Can my many mistakes somehow be forgotten by the holy God? Is there any possibility that the Almighty God can look fondly upon me, wretched sinner that I am and let me into his heaven? To which Jesus says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. Trust in God's love, and mercy, and grace" Jesus says. "Trust also in my redemptive work for you."

As the Apostle Paul writes: (Ephesians 1:7) In [Jesus] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace. During the Civil War, the Evangelist Dwight Moody worked with the Christian Commission. One day he was going down the Tennessee River after the bloody Battle of Shiloh with a cargo of the wounded. He ministered to all the men as he was able. As he was doing so, he came to a wounded man whom the doctors said could not recover because he had lost so much blood. The young man was unconscious. Another soldier standing nearby said that the boy was his buddy, that he had a widowed mother living, and that his name was William Clark. Suddenly the boy opened his eyes, and Moody said to him, "William, do you know where you are?" The lad looked around for a moment in a daze, and then said, "Oh, yes, I am on my way home to mother." "Yes, you are on your way home," Moody said; "but the doctor says you won't reach your earthly home. Do you have any message for your mother?" At that the boy's face lit up, and he answered, "Oh, yes, tell my mother that I died trusting in Jesus."

That is the way to live! That is the way to die! Trusting in Jesus all the way! And when God calls us from our earthly home, Christ will receive us into our heavenly home because we trusted in Him. That's what Jesus meant when he said, "Trust in me." "Trust in me," Jesus said. "I was born for you. I lived for you. I died for you. I rose from the dead for you. I ascended into heaven for you. I am waiting there for you. As a matter of fact," Jesus continues: (John 14:2) In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. This is an incredible passage. It's only recorded here in John, and we can be so thankful the Holy Spirit moved John to write this down for us. Most of the focus on these words goes into the part about the Father's house with many rooms, and Jesus preparing a place there. What will that home be like? How will it look? How big will it be? Will it have all my favorite things in it? We tend to get caught up in the Father's house with many rooms, and how awesome that must be. And there is no doubt that it will be awesome.

But I submit to you that the greatest emphasis in this passage should not be on the place, but on the words "for you." In my Father's house there are many rooms; I am going there to prepare a place for you. The greatest part of Jesus' words are not the awesome accommodations that he is preparing, but that Jesus is preparing a place in that heavenly mansion, for you and for me. Jesus expects us there. He wants us there. He has done everything necessary to bring us there. And he is eager to welcome us there. We don't deserve it. We certainly didn't earn it. But Jesus gives it to us anyway.

And Jesus wasn't done with his wonderful promises. He goes on to say this: (John 14:3) 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. And again, I think that perhaps the main emphasis of these words is easily overlooked. It's easy to think that the most important thing Jesus is stressing here is that fact that he will come back to get us. He's telling us he's going away to prepare a place for us, so he reassures us that he won't abandon us. He will come back for us. And that is a wonderful truth. An important truth. A comforting truth. But it's not the most wonderful, important, and comforting truth. The most wonderful, important, and comforting truth is found in the next words. I will come back and take you, to be with me that you also may be where I am. In other words, we will be with Jesus. Rotten, wretched, undeserving sinners that we are, we will not only be in heaven, but we will be in heaven in the very presence of Jesus. Jesus is going to live in our mansion with us. He'll be with us. We'll be with Him. We'll be together forever. How awesome is that? So what does this mean for us today, here and now, as we live as sinners in this sinful world?

It means this. When we recognize that we have no right to go to heaven because of our many sins, but that Jesus has made a way for us there by his death on the cross. And when we realize that not only has Jesus died horribly for us, but that he lives magnificently for us in heaven and that he is preparing a magnificent place there for us to live with him one day. We find ourselves overwhelmed with awe, wonder, and exquisite joy. And we find ourselves hating sin. We find ourselves loathing the very thought of disobeying Jesus. We find ourselves longing to live for the Lord, abandoning sin and embracing righteousness. When we realize that we should be damned, but are saved instead we try to live our lives like we are already holy and in heaven. Because that's where we want to be and that's where we know we'll be one day because of Jesus. And on that day when we suddenly find ourselves in heaven, the words of our epistle reading will suddenly become real. (Hebrews

12:22-24) But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all people, to the spirits of righteous people made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. And we will know that we are home. And we will be astonished, but overjoyed that God in his boundless grace let even us into his heaven.