

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Your Convictions About Heaven

KEY PASSAGE: John 14:1-6 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Matthew 5:12, 16; 6:20-21 | Luke 10:17, 20 | Acts 1:11
Romans 8:34 | 2 Corinthians 5:8 | Ephesians 1:13-14; 2:4-9 | Philippians 3:20-21 | Colossians 3:1
1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 | Hebrews 7:25 | 1 Peter 1:3-4 | Revelation 21:2, 27

► SUMMARY

Most people don't think much about heaven unless they are facing death.

In fact, few Christians give serious thought to their eternal home, and therefore, have no convictions about heaven. Furthermore, they may not know what the Bible says regarding heaven and can't even remember hearing a sermon about it. This results in confusion and an unbiblical understanding of what awaits believers after this life.

► SERMON POINTS

Although God has not revealed everything about heaven to us, Scripture provides insights that motivate us to live for our eternal destiny rather than this earthly existence.

Our heavenly Father is there.

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), Jesus often spoke about His Father "who is in heaven" (5:16). Instead of speculating on where heaven is, we can simply say that it's wherever God is.

Our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is there.

When Jesus ascended into the clouds in Acts 1:11, two angels told the disciples, "This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." He ascended to His Father and is now "seated at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1). From there, He intercedes for us (Rom. 8:34).

Heaven is a prepared place.

It's not some ethereal fog in which we float around, but a place specially prepared for God's children. Jesus said, "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" (John 14:2). According to Revelation 21:27, "Nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Our citizenship is in heaven.

An old gospel song says, "This world is not my home. I'm just a-passing through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue." This earth is only our temporary home so we must be careful not to become too attached to the things of this world. Having a right understanding of heaven changes our perspective and priorities in this life, prompting us to lay up treasures in heaven rather than on earth.

According to Philippians 3:20-21, "Our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory." These earthly bodies are not fit for life in heaven. Therefore, when Christ returns for us, He's going to transform them into glorious bodies like His. Although we don't know exactly what we'll look like, we can be sure that our new heavenly bodies will be far more glorious than the ones we have now.

The names of those who are saved are recorded in heaven as citizens of His kingdom.

When Jesus sent out seventy disciples to heal and proclaim the kingdom of God, they came back saying, “Even the demons are subject to us in Your name” (Luke 10:17). But as impressive as this display of power was, Jesus told them, “Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven” (v. 20). Whenever anyone turns from sin and believes in Jesus for salvation, that person’s name is forever recorded in heaven.

Spiritually, believers are already in heaven.

God views us in light of our relationship with His Son who took our sins upon Himself and gave us His perfect record of righteousness. He has “made us alive together with Christ ... raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:5-6). In God’s mind it’s as if we are already there. As a further guarantee of our spiritual position in heaven, we who have believed in Christ have been “sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance” (Eph. 1:13-14).

No matter what we face now, our eternal hope is secure, and in God’s presence everything will be perfect. When life is tough, we can find hope in knowing what the Lord has in store for us in heaven. Although our desires may not be fulfilled in this life, in eternity all our longings will be satisfied. Knowing our heavenly position also increases our desire to live a godly life now because that is our destiny. Once we enter heaven, we will be freed from sin completely and be absolutely holy.

Heaven is where our treasure is.

Jesus warned His followers not to accumulate earthly goods that do not last, but to “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:20-21). Our security

is not found in money or property. Anything that can be bought can also be lost, and nothing we accumulate will come with us when we die. The only thing that will last is our relationship with Christ. And our heavenly treasures are our good deeds, obedience, holiness, and actions of love, kindness, and forgiveness.

Our inheritance and rewards are in heaven.

Salvation is by faith not works, but once we’re saved, we do good works because we’re God’s children. And when we get to heaven, we will be rewarded for what we have done. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told those who were persecuted, insulted, and slandered because of Him, “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great” (Matt. 5:12). Peter also says that we have “an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:4).

Our saved loves ones and friends are there.

When a believer dies, he or she goes immediately into the presence of the Lord in heaven (2 Cor. 5:8). However, one day Jesus will return for His church, and He’s going to bring with Him those who have died in Christ (1 Thess. 4:13-17). They will be resurrected first: “Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord” (v. 17). What a grand reunion that will be when we are all gathered together in our heavenly home!

► RESPONSE

- Have you ever seriously thought about heaven? More importantly, are you confident that you will go there when you die? What did Jesus mean when He claimed to be the only way (John 14:6)?
- How has this sermon changed your perspective of heaven? How will it affect the way you live now? What changes are you going to make as a result of your greater understanding of heaven?

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