

K-473 Heaven, More Heaven

by Art Katz

We are called to live with an eternal perspective, deny earthly desires, and focus on the reward of faith, which is eternal life in God's kingdom.

Duration: 30:20

Topics: "Heaven"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the constant demand for our attention from the seductive and materialistic world. He describes how the world uses sophisticated appeals to entice us into consumerism and distractions. The preacher also shares his personal experience of facing rejection and the temptation to seek applause and recognition. He encourages believers to be strangers and pilgrims in the world, marching to a different beat and not being swayed by worldly rewards. The sermon concludes by highlighting the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 and the greater calling and requirement upon believers to live a life of faith and integrity.

Transcript

Bless the Lord, you sure make me feel anemic. The pastor didn't say it, but I'm a Jewish brother. For whatever that's worth, I somehow knew that that would bless you.

We've had a remarkable history together, and a remarkable affinity for each other. Such a resonance between the history of Israel crossing the Jordan, coming out of bondage and slavery. Our own pilgrimage and yours, so remarkably parallel.

And I believe that there's yet something future that eclipses all the past. A glory that has something to do between the relationship of all peoples, as we come to the conclusion of this age. I just finished speaking to some black brothers in Washington, D.C., in the basement.

They were the elders of a local fellowship there. And I said, I need to tell you in all seriousness, that upon your heads and upon mine, will come a greater fury and violence in the last days than for any other. And it will come to us from our own people, who think that we have sold out, that we're opposing them, that we are with the establishment, we bought a white man's gospel, or whatever it is, when the fury of hell is released, in an earth and a world system that is going to convulse and break at its foundations, and the pompous and inflated lifestyle that we have enjoyed in this generation is going to be ruthlessly and suddenly removed.

We're going to see a harsh reaction to that, for which few are prepared. So I know that I know, that the fury of our own people, opposing themselves, in their own ignorance, and looking upon us as having betrayed them, and standing with others, who have perhaps brought their suffering upon them, in things that we'll not be able to explain to them, but we'll just have to suffer their fury. There's going to be a greater requirement upon us.

And that's what I shared with those brothers, and I have something of that same sense in my heart tonight for you. If you'll turn with me to the book of Hebrews, in the wonderful chapter on faith, chapter 11, all the great heroes of the faith, with whom we are in an unbroken continuum. Here's something that caught my attention in chapter 11.

In verse 8, By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place, which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise, for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Verse 13, These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country, and truly that they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned, but now they desire a better country, that is a heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. The chapter ends about describing this roll call of great saints as being of a kind, in verse 38, of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth, and these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Here's what I want to draw to your attention. These all in verse 13 died in faith, not having received the promises. Verse 39, and these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.

Have you ever looked at that? Have you ever realized that the greatest giants of the faith, these all died, not having received the promise? Not just an occasional one or an exceptional one, all of them died without receiving the promise. That's a strange thing if you'll consider it. It means that they did not receive in this life the thing for which they gave themselves totally to God, being giants of the faith.

They had a good report, but they did not receive the thing for which they were striving in God. What does that mean? It's not a fluke that God somehow slipped up and ignored the reward that should have been theirs for faithfulness, but it indicates that the promise is not to be had in this life. Duh-dum-dum.

It all of a sudden requires a radical consideration if we are to be joined with these in the same quality of faith, which means that we can serve God tirelessly and totally without having to have our reward in this life. It means that we can live with a deferred gratification. We do not have to have it now.

Now let that sink deeply into your hearing because every one of us are products of a whole world system and a culture that says have it now. To live without that gratification and to postpone something that is not even yours in this life requires a remarkable faith that it will be obtained and that in fact in the place and time that is future and eternal is more significant even than the present. That this present life is preparation and anticipation for that.

Here's what I'm telling the church wherever the Lord stirs me to this. We are not sufficiently eternally minded. I'm not calling you saints to some kind of escapism that this life is just an interlude in a momentary thing and it's an eternal thing for which we're waiting and that gives us a brave kind of resignation in this life in which we suffer any kind of thing that comes.

Men have misused that kind of understanding in order to justify a misuse and an abuse of people who are under them when the ministry is full. If there's any people who deserve gratification now it's you. You've labored long and hard for it and you've been shut out long enough in the world and everything that is in you and every impulse cries out for recognition, for success, for achievement, for gratification now.

But God is putting before you a cross tonight of voluntary yielding up of any desire for the gratification to be had now for something to be deferred later and after he received the inheritance. And that's not something by which now you should fall asleep and fold your hands but that the contemplation of the reward is so real for you, so vivid that it affects your present life powerfully. God has called us to be strangers, pilgrims and sojourners in the world.

A strange people who march by another beat. We're not moved by the world and its rewards. We can move through it like giants among the world of pygmies.

We are indifferent. We can't be suckered out. We can't be wooed and seduced by honorary doctorates.

We would rather be joined with this roll call of the saints than any reward that men can bestow presently. And with every reward that is presently bestowed by men, there is an appropriate compromise in our integrity, in the quality of our faith, the quality of our witness and our service to God. The last thing that God would want to see is that you should become some kind of successful black Pentecostal Christian culture.

He has a much higher intention than that for you. So much so that I believe that we are tonight encircled about by a cloud of invisible witnesses of whom the world was not worthy. And we are in an unbroken continuum with them starting from the beginning of the holy apostolic prophetic faith right through to the end.

Despite every appeal to move us off that course and to bring us into some sideline that would guarantee our success and attention and attraction and look how we've made it, we will turn a deaf ear to every such seduction and look with a single eye to the reward and the inheritance and the fulfillment of the promise that is received after. This is contrary excuse the fancy language to the whole ethos of our culture E-T-H-O-S the whole unspoken premise of our modern civilization is have it now. Immediate gratification.

To defer gratification to some future time is a form of suffering like fasting you eat later you eat after. How about when you've preached your heart out and you come down off the steps of the platform and people look at you with a stony glare or a strange silence and you feel a little bit like a leper and you're just not one of the boys and you didn't hit the emotional chords that they're accustomed to experiencing and you've spoken strange things and they look at you with glassy eyes like where are you from and you've got to eat that when everything in you that's human wants to be applauded wants to be congratulated wants to have your back slapped and say boy that was great and I'll tell you if we are still alive to that kind of gratification we will please to preach men and not God.

See I was a set up even tonight to carry on in the spirit of things that were already established in order to win your endearment but I would rather be God's man and appear to you strange and speak some difficult thing what is he saying and leave you even a little bit perplexed if I can be assured that what you're hearing is God's holy word designed for you whether it pleases you or endears me to you or not and that's not because I'm indifferent to you but because there's something more important than that we should be buddy-buddy on a false basis of man-pleasing but men and women who are joined together in the most holy faith of whom the world is not worthy and they that say such things are looking for a city whose maker and builder is God they that say such things and deny this world

and its immediate gratifications and have an eye toward eternity and heaven and the crown of reward that is before them will be strange not only in the world but before Christians they that say such things invite a retaliation on their own heads as I said to this morning's congregation the issue of the last days is resurrection and there'll be a false church and a true church apostate and apostolic and both will subscribe to the same doctrine of resurrection as being correct but the one that will be hated by the other is the one that lives in the power of that resurrection and whose very life gives the evidence of the reality and the truth of it and the false church will not be able to abide your presence because even in your silence you blow the whistle on their fraudulent false

Christianity God's jealous over you saints He knows your history He knows your yearning He knows how much you want to make it and need to be accepted after you've been held down for so long and everything in you craves for approval to deny that is to bear the cross it's to embrace the cross so great is God's intention for you that if you will deny that seductive thing that wants to elevate and promote you in a kind of religious success that falls short of the glory of God it is for you a greater measure of sacrifice and suffering than for any other it says in chapter 10 verse 34 you had compassion of me in my bonds Paul speaking and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and an enduring substance you know that is heaven just a

category or is it a reality I'll tell you for heaven to become real you'll have to deny earthly things there's a collision and an antagonism between the things that are seen and the things that are invisible and Paul said that he sees the things that are invisible and eternal he sees the eternal weight of glory that makes his present afflictions momentary and light now listen saints and listen hard if you buy forgive the language if you receive what I'm speaking tonight and commit yourself to such a course as being put before you you will invite retaliation opposition and persecution you'll see to it that you'll have afflictions because the world will not be able to bear your witness they'd much rather that you just constitute a little cute black Pentecostal culture that is fun to come

out once in a while and to enjoy your worship but when they see something heavenly in your life your character your walk your service your relationships your ministry your witness you're going to become strangely irritating to them who like you harmless the same glimpse of heaven and its rewards that makes the afflictions both momentary and light is the very same thing that invites the afflictions and it's a scandal that the church of Jesus Christ has not known persecution in this country it has nothing to do with geography because you're behind the iron curtain or not an apostolic lifestyle a church that is the ground and pillar of truth a church that is indifferent to the world and to its rewards and looks to heaven and has a single eye only for the glory of God will by that its very

nature invite opposition and persecution even from its own kind but for Paul the vision of the thing invisible was so real that it had a practical consequence now see this is what makes us strange eternity doesn't

take place after we die God intends that we bring eternity into time now we're eternally minded now we can drive a Mercedes or a BMW or a Volkswagen or a scooter and it doesn't matter the one way or the other if it has come from his hand nothing rises up in us when we sit behind the wheel of the one or the other it's a conveyance given of God period we touch the world but we touch it in passing it's going to take something heroic to take your eyeballs off the world or else you'll not glimpse the thing that is invisible and eternal there's a continual demand for your attention

the world is voluptuous seductive it's built it's stacked it's got all the cards it knows how to purvey its goods it sends out its catalogs our mailboxes are filled we turn on the TV there's one advertisement or another even the kids are appealed to for this serial or for that or clothing or games my God we're inundated in appeals I've been around for 63 years saints and I have never seen such sophisticated appeals for merchandise for having and spending and getting that is now true in the world and here's the heck of it even the church finds it legitimate it's not a matter of being sinful it's a matter of living an austere simple apostolic lifestyle just because we can afford to indulge those things is not the justification to enjoy them but it requires a heroic resistance to the things

that we don't need because we want to keep our eyes single and suffused with heaven and the God of heaven it's going to take sacrifice to take your eyes off to avoid the sports page the TV set everything that somehow has a legitimacy but the total weight of those things is to dull your faith and to make you less than what God intends I don't want you coming on a Sunday night just for cathartic release what do you mean by that cats? what I mean by that is you've lived carnally all week long and then you throw it off in one emotional and enjoyment of cutting loose on a Sunday night and then Monday as soon as you return you're back again onto the carnal thing God did not intend the most holy faith for cathartic release for a week long carnality to be expended in a moment on a Sunday night

but if you don't keep your heart with all diligence individually and corporately what is now authentic today is next week beginning to decline and erode and erode until it becomes a culture and a form and a reflex action God is crying out for authenticity and I'll tell you to be authentic in a world that's phony is painful suffering and sacrifice knowing in yourselves not just in your mind not just as a piece of doctrine to which you give appropriate approval knowing in yourselves in your gut in the inner man where you really live there's a deep abiding awareness that heaven eclipses anything that is present and that this life is preparation for that endless eternal union with God and the ruling and reigning with him in his millennial kingdom over his creation don't think you're going to

be sitting on a cloud plucking a harp there are profound administrative functions of his kingdom waiting for those who will replace the displaced angelic beings who have usurped and misruled and become the gods of this age and will be cast out of heaven and their vacancies need to be fulfilled by a people prepared who are mature and able God takes us off of dung-keeps that we might sit with princes our Christianity is more than Sunday culture it's a preparation for an eternal destiny and God will have the eternal praise that former drug addicts winos sensualists Jewish rebels are with him now in the meekness of the lamb and in the character of God serving to bring the benevolence of his kingdom over his creation because the government of God is not shuffling papers it's not bureaucracy as

men do it it's the bringing of the wisdom and the righteousness of God and teaching men how to live according to his divine principles on earth we will ascend and descend upon the son of God and be sent for special missions some will rule ten cities and some five and it will be exactly proportionate to the reward earned in this life don't think we'll all have the same crown some of us who want to play it safe and

want to play it cozy and just be regular Christians will be crownless you're not going to hell but you're not going to be in proximity to the radiant son of God at his throne you wouldn't be able to bear the intensity of that light I want you to be suffused with heaven to take heaven into your spirit it's not a cop-out it's not some hokey kind of thing that we can wait to

consider after we go if we don't take it into our consideration now we will enter eternity suffering loss knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and an enduring substance that will not fade away cast not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompense of reward for you have need of patience that after you have done the will of God you might receive the promise after I don't know of any message more calculated to go over like a lead balloon than to encourage God's people to be mindful of that which comes after as an inheritance to those who are faithful who have a view toward the reward and do not lose their confidence of the great recompense which is theirs for you have need of patience that after you have done the will of God you might receive the promise for

yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry now the just shall live by faith isn't that remarkable the whole discussion has been about what comes after the reward the recompense for faithful service and then you hear now the just shall live by faith here's the strange thing to which we're called we're called to be relevant now to be significant now to be a an expression of God and his purpose and his will now but we will never be that if we do not take the eternal future into our present consideration now is not now except we live it by faith now the just shall live by faith but it's a faith that takes eternity into its deepest consideration now these all died in faith chapter 11 13 not having received the promises but having seen them afar off by the eye of the

spirit and were persuaded of them and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth for it's moving by another beat it's having another mode of life it's an anticipation of something future of which you are confident and sure though you will not experience it in this life I'm willing to defer gratification now and if any man had the earmarks and the qualifications for success now it was Kit Katz tall good looking well spoken Jewish all of the credentials that would have made him a Jewish Billy Graham if I had only moved to the queues of men and responded according to the things that would make for a religious success now fame fortune but I'm looking at something eternal I have view of a greater reward I've allowed God to deal with me ruthlessly to pluck

out and bring the application of the cross as death to that impulse that wants to be recognized by men now that wants success now it's no easy thing to come out from the orbit of the earth and to be a citizen of heaven while you're yet in the earth for there are two classes of people when the smoke clears at the end of the age those that dwell on the earth whose hearts fail them for fear for the things that are coming upon the earth and those who dwell in heaven though they live also in Raleigh, Durham North Carolina where your heart is there is your treasure also Paul said my citizenship is in heaven you know what the remarkable thing is? you would think that a heavenly minded man is no earthly good but there was no man more profoundly valuable and practical than Paul in all of the

issues of the church life even to the details of how to take communion how to deal with sin in the camp the nitty gritty nuts and bolts issues of the faith Paul was right on but he was a man from heaven he had his citizenship in heaven and that did not deter from his practicality on earth it was the very fact that made him practical the world says if you're heavenly minded you're no earthly good it's a lie unless you're heavenly minded you're no earthly good heaven more heaven ought to be the cry of God's people remember when Jesus spoke to Nicodemus the ruler of the Jews the epitome of Jewish religious ability morality ethics I tell

you if there was no God what Nicodemus represented was an ideal but there was another man with whom he was in conversation who represented something

altogether other than what Nicodemus was he was the man from heaven Jesus the Christ and Nicodemus the earthly man asked earthly questions we know that you come from God for no man can do what you do except God be with him and Jesus answered him from a heavenly place except you're born again of the spirit you cannot see the kingdom of God except you're born of spirit and water you cannot enter the kingdom of God and you say what relationship does Jesus' answer have to Nicodemus' question and the answer is nothing and it doesn't have to we are not obliged to give earthly answers to earthly questions we're required to give heavenly answers even if it leaves men bewildered but are you in that kind of proximity to heaven or are you more earthly thinking that if you quote John 3.16 you've

discharged your duty I'll tell you that if that John 3.16 has not been inspired from heaven you've missed it in an eternal moment and you've given an earthly answer that has no heavenly value we can't play this by the numbers we can't be mechanical it requires such a union with the God of heaven we are thought

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