

The Earnest of Heaven

by C.H. Spurgeon

Heaven is an inheritance given to those who are begotten again unto a lively hope, and it is a place of rest, communion, and joy.

Duration: 42:12

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 15:6, Acts 9:11, 1 Corinthians 2:10, 2 Corinthians 2:14, Revelation 7:14, Revelation 21:27

Topics: "Heavenly Joy", "Repentance"

Description

The sermon transcript discusses the joy in heaven when a lost sheep is found and when sinners repent. It emphasizes the joy and celebration among the angels and saints in heaven when someone turns to God. The sermon also mentions the importance of studying the Bible and seeking God's message in the text. It concludes by highlighting the eternal joy and service of the people of God in heaven, never growing weary or hoarse with music.

Transcript

The Prince of Preachers Charles Haddon Spurgeon has been called England's greatest contribution to the spread of the gospel in the 19th century. One of his contemporaries said that the chief secret of Spurgeon's attractiveness was the fact that in every sermon, no matter what the text or the occasion, he explained the way of salvation in simple terms. Spurgeon's messages remain one of the great treasure houses of Christian literature, still bringing the light of the gospel and the comfort of the scriptures to hungry souls long after the preacher has passed into glory.

This is Charles Kelsch inviting you to listen to a message from the Prince of Preachers. This message was preached by C.H. Spurgeon on February 3rd, 1861, at the Exeter Hall. It is entitled, The Earnest of Heaven.

The text is found in Ephesians chapter 1, verses 13 and 14. That holy spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance. So then heaven with all its glories is an inheritance.

Now an inheritance is not a thing which is bought with money, earned by labor, or won by conquest. If any man hath an inheritance, in the proper sense of that term, it came to him by birth. It was not because of any special merit in him, but simply because he was his father's son that he received the property of which he is now possessed.

So it is with heaven. The man who shall receive this glorious heritage will not obtain it by the works of the law, nor by the efforts of the flesh. It will be given to him as a matter of most gracious right, because he has been begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and has thus become an heir of heaven by blood and birth.

They who come unto glory are sons. For is it not written, The captain of our salvation bringeth many sons unto glory? They come not there as servants. No servant has any right to the inheritance of his master.

Let him be never so faithful, yet is he not his master's heir. But because ye are sons, sons by God's adoption, sons by the Spirit's regeneration, because by supernatural energy ye have been born again, ye become inheritors of eternal life, and ye enter into the many mansions of our Father's house above. Let us always understand, then, when we think of heaven, that it is a place which is to be ours, and a state which we are to enjoy as the result of birth, not as the result of work.

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God, that kingdom being an inheritance, until he hath a new birth he can have no claim to enter it. But is it possible for us, provided that heaven be our inheritance, and we are God's sons, is it possible for us to know anything whatever of that land beyond the flood? Is there power in human intellect to fly into the land of the hereafter and reach those islands of the happy where God's people rest in the bosom of their God eternally? We are met at the outset with a rebuff which staggers us. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

If we paused here, we might give up all idea of beholding from our houses of clay that goodly land and Lebanon. But we do not pause, for like the apostle we go on with the text, and we add, But he hath revealed it unto us by his Spirit. It is possible to look within the veil.

God's Spirit can turn it aside for a moment, and bid us take a glimpse, though it be but a distant one, at that unutterable glory. There are Pisgahs even now on the surface of the earth, from the top of which the celestial Canaan can be beheld. There are hallowed hours in which the mists and clouds are swept away, and the sun shineth in his strength.

And our eye, being freed from its natural dimness, beholds something of that land which is very far off, and sees a little of the joy and blessedness which is reserved for the people of God hereafter. Our text tells us that the Holy Spirit is the earnest of the inheritance, by which I understand that he is not only the pledge. For a pledge is given for security, but when the thing pledged is given, then the pledge itself is restored.

But he is an earnest, which is a pledge and something more. An earnest is a part of the thing itself. It is not only a pledge of the thing for security, but it is a foretaste of it for present enjoyment.

The word in the Greek has a stronger force than our word, pledge. Again I repeat it. If I promise to pay a man somewhat, I may give him land or property in pledge.

But if instead thereof I pay him a part of the sum which I have promised, that is a pledge, but it is more. It is an earnest, because it is a part of the thing itself. So the Holy Spirit is a pledge to God's people.

Inasmuch as God hath given them the graces of the Spirit, he will give them the glory that results therefrom. But he is more. He is a foretaste.

He is a sweet antipast of heaven, so that they who possess the Spirit of God possess the first tastes of heaven. They have reaped the first fruits of the eternal harvest. The first drops of a shower of glory have fallen upon them.

They have beheld the first beams of the rising sun of bliss. They have not merely a pledge for security. They have an earnest, which is security and foretaste combined.

Understand, then, for this is what I am about to speak of this morning. By the Holy Spirit there is given to the people of God, even now, experiences, joys and feelings which prove that they shall be in heaven, which do more, which bring heaven down to them and make them already able to guess in some measure what heaven must be. When I have enlarged upon that theme, I shall take the black side of the picture and remark that it is possible for men on earth to have both a pledge and an earnest of those eternal pains which are reserved for the impenitent.

A dark subject, but may God grant it may be for our profit and arousing. First, then, there are some works of the Spirit which are peculiarly an earnest to the child of God of the blessings of heaven. And first, heaven is a state of rest.

It may be because I am constitutionally idle that I look upon heaven in the aspect of rest with greater delight than under any other view of it, with but one exception. To let the head which is so continually exercised for once lie still, to have no care, no trouble, no need to labor, to strain the intellect or vex the limbs. I know that many of you, the sons of poverty and of toil, look forward to the Sabbath day because of the enjoyments of the sanctuary and because of the rest which it affords you.

You look for heaven as Watts did in his song. There shall I bathe my weary soul in seas of heavenly rest, and not a wave of trouble roll across my peaceful breast. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

It is not a rest of sleep, but yet a rest as perfect as though they slept. It is a rest which puts from them all carking care, all howling remorse, all thoughts of tomorrow, all straining after a something which they have not as yet. They are runners no more.

They have reached the goal. They are warriors no more. They have achieved the victory.

They are laborers no more. They have reaped their harvest. They rest, saith the Spirit.

They rest from their labors, and their works do follow them. My beloved, did you ever enjoy on certain high days of your experience a state of perfect rest? You could say you had not a wish in all the world ungratified. You knew yourself to be pardoned.

You felt yourself to be an heir of heaven. Christ was precious to you. You knew that you walked in the light of your Father's countenance.

You had cast all your worldly care on Him, for He cared for you. You felt at that hour that if death could smite away your dearest friends, or if calamity should remove the most valuable part of your possessions on earth, yet you could say, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Your spirit floated along the stream of grace without a struggle. You were not as the swimmer who breast the billows and tugs and toils for life. Your soul was made to lie down in green pastures beside the still waters.

You were passive in God's hands. You knew no will but His. Oh, that sweet day! That heavenly calm within the breast was the sure pledge of glorious rest, which for the church of God remains the end of cares, the end of pains.

Nay, it was more than a pledge. It was a part of the rest itself. It was a morsel taken from the loaf of delights.

It was a sip out of the wine vats of immortal joy. It was a silver spray from the waves of glory. So then, whenever we are quiet and at peace, for we which have believed do enter into rest and have ceased from our own works as God did from His, when we can say, O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise.

When our spirit is full of love within us and our peace is like a river and our righteousness like the wave of the sea, then we already know in some degree what heaven is. We have but to make that peace deeper and yet more profound, lasting and more continual. We have but to multiply it eternally, and we have obtained a noble idea of the rest which remaineth for the people of God.

But secondly, there is a passage in the book of Revelation, which may sometimes puzzle the uninstructed reader, where it is said concerning the angels that they rest not day and night. And as we are to be as the angels of God, it must undoubtedly be true in heaven that in a certain sense they rest not day nor night. They always rest, so far as ease and freedom from care is concerned.

They never rest in the sense of indolence or inactivity. In heaven, spirits are always on the wing. Their lips are always singing the eternal hallelujahs unto the great Jehovah that sitteth upon the throne.

Their fingers are never divorced from the strings of their golden harps. Their feet never cease to run in obedience to the eternal will. O, they rest, but they rest on the wing.

As the poet pictured the angel as he flew, not needing to move his wings, but resting, and yet darting swiftly through the ether, as though he were a flash shot from the eye of God. So shall it be with the people of God eternally. Ever singing, never hoarse with music.

Ever serving, never wearied with their service. They rest not day and night. Have there never been times with you when you have had both the pledge and the earnest of this kind of heaven? Ay, when we have preached once and again and again and again and one day, and some have said, but the constitution will be destroyed, the mind will be weakened, such toil as this will bring the man low.

But we have been able to reply, we do not feel it. For the more toil has been cast upon us, the more strength has been given. Have you ever known what it is to have the pastor's work in revival times? When he has had to sit hour after hour, seeing convert after convert, when the time for one meal has passed and he has forgotten it, and the time for another meal has come and gone and he has forgotten that.

For he has been so busy and so happy with his feast of ingatherings that he has been like his master and has forgotten to eat bread and positively did not hunger and did not thirst, because the joy of the service had taken away all fatigue. Just at this hour our missionaries are engaged throughout Jamaica in a

sweltering sun, preaching the word. Perhaps there has never been a more glorious revival than that which God has sent to that island, an island which has often been blessed, but which now seems to have received a sevenfold portion.

One missionary in writing home says that he had not been in bed one night for a week, and he had been preaching all day and all night long. And I do not doubt but his testimony to you would be that at least during the first part of the labor it seemed not to be labor. He could sleep on the wing, he could rest while he worked.

The joy of success took away from him the feeling of lassitude. The blessed prospect of seeing so many added to the church of God had made him forget even to eat bread. Well then, at such a time as that he had a foretaste of the rest and the service too which remaineth for the people of God.

O do not doubt if you find comfort in serving God, and such comfort that you grow not weary in his service. Do not doubt, I say, but that you shall soon join that hallowed throng who day without night circle his throne rejoicing, who rest not but serve him day and night in his temple. These feelings are foretaste, and they are pledges too.

They give some inklings of what heaven must be, and they make your title to heaven clear. But let us pass on. Heaven is a place of communion with all the people of God.

I am sure that in heaven they know each other. I could not perhaps just now prove it in so many words, but I feel that a heaven of people who did not know each other and had no fellowship could not be heaven, because God has so constituted the human heart that it loves society, and especially the renewed heart is so made that it cannot help communing with all the people of God. I always say to my strict Baptist brethren who think it a dreadful thing for baptized believers to commune with the unbaptized, but you cannot help it.

If you are the people of God, you must commune with all saints, baptized or not. You may deny them the outward and visible sign, but you cannot keep from them the inward and spiritual grace. If a man be a child of God, I do not care what I may think about him.

If I be a child of God, I do commune with him, and I must, for we are all parts of the same body, all knit to Christ, and it is not possible that one part of Christ's body should ever be in any state but that of communion with all the rest of the body. Well in glory, I feel I may say, we know we shall converse with each other. We shall talk of our trials on the way thither, talk most of all of him who by his faithful love and his potent arm has brought us safely through.

We shall not sing solos, but in chorus shall we praise our King. We shall not look upon our fellows there like men in the iron mask whose name and character we do not know, for there we shall know even as we are known. You shall talk with the prophets, you shall have conversation with the martyrs, you shall sit again at the feet of the great reformers and all your brethren in the faith who have fallen before you, or who have rather entered into rest before, and these shall be your companions on the other side of the grave.

How sweet that must be! How blessed that holy converse, that happy union, that general assembly and church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven! Have we anything on earth like this? Ay, that we have, in miniature. We have the pledge of this, for if we love the people of God, we may know that we

shall surely be with them in heaven. We have the earnest of it, for how often has it been our privilege to hold the highest and sweetest fellowship with our fellow Christians.

Why, you and I have often said, did not our hearts burn within us while we talked together by the way, and Christ was with us both? When we have been together, and the doors have been shut, has not the Master said, Peace be unto you? When love has gone from heart to heart, and we have all felt knit together as one man, when party names were all forgotten, when all jealousies and bickerings were driven out of doors, and we felt we were one family, and all did bear the same one name, having one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Then it was that we had the earnest, the foretaste, the first drinking of that well of Bethlehem, which is on the other side of the pearly gate of the celestial city. I have to be brief on each of these points, for there are so many to mention.

Part of the bliss of heaven will consist in joy over sinners saved. The angels look down from the battlements of the city, which have foundations, and when they see prodigals return, they sing, Jesus calleth together his friends and neighbors, and he saith unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found the sheep which was lost. The angels begin the theme, the sacred fire runs through the host, and all the saints above take up the strain.

Hark how they sing before the throne, for it has just been whispered there of some Saul. Behold, he prayeth. Hark how their songs get a new inspiration, how their eternal Sabbath seems to be sabotaged afresh, and the rest becomes more joyous far, while they sing of newborn sons added to the family, and new names written in the register of the church below.

Part of the joy of heaven, and no mean part of it, will be to watch the fight on earth, to see the conqueror as he marches on, and to behold the trophies of his grace, and the spoils which his hands shall win. Is there anything like this on earth? Ay, that there is, when the Spirit of God gives to us joy over sinners saved. The other evening, when some of us sat in church, what joy was there when one after another, those who had been plucked from the deepest hell of sin, made a vowel of their faith in Christ.

Some of us look back upon those church meetings as the gladdest nights we ever spent, when first one and then another has said, I have been plucked as a bran from the burning, and the tale of grace has been told, and a third has stood up and said, and I too was once a stranger, wandering far from God, and Jesus sought me. Why, we have some of us gone home and felt that it was heaven below to have been there. We have felt more joy over the conversion of others, we have sometimes thought, than even over our own.

It has been such bliss, while we have taken the hand of the convert, and the tear has been in both eyes, when the word of gratitude has been spoken, and Jesus Christ has been magnified by lips that once blasphemed Him. My brothers and sisters, though the whole world should send for me, I cannot help it. I must tell it to the praise of God's free grace and boundless love.

There are hundreds here that are wonderful trophies of grace. My heart has been most gladdened, and your hearts have been gladdened too. I must not keep it back.

I will not. It was my Master's work. It is to His honor.

It is to His praise. We will tell that on earth, which we will sing in heaven. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and I do believe that the joy we felt when sinners have

been converted has been in earnest and a pledge that we shall be partakers of the like joy in heaven.

But to proceed. Here is another earnest of heaven, which is rather a personal matter than one which is drawn from others. Did you ever get a knotty passage of Scripture which repeated itself in your mind so many times that you could not get rid of it? You borrowed some commentaries.

You opened them, and you found that you might inquire within, but get no information whatever upon the particular subject you wished most to be informed about. Commentaries generally are books which are written to explain those parts of Scripture which everybody understands, and to make those that are dark more mysterious than they were before. At any rate, if that was the aim of the different authors, they have most of them admirably succeeded.

I do not believe in great commentaries upon the whole Bible. No one man can write such a book so that all of it shall be valuable. When a man gives his whole lifetime to some one book, that one is worth reading.

When a man has taken up, as some have done, the epistle to the Romans, or the book of Genesis, and gone on year after year toiling through it, then such a book has been a monument of labor, and has been valuable to the Christian student. But generally, large commentaries give little information where most it is needed. Well, disappointed, you have gone back to your Bible, and have said, I must not meddle with this text.

It is above me. But it has repeated itself in your ears, and you could not make it out. It has followed you, dogged your steps.

It would not go away from you. At last you thought, there was a message from God in that text to you. You prayed over it.

While you were praying, some one word in the text seemed to lift itself right out of the connection, and shone upon you like a star. And in the light of that one word, you could see the meaning of all the words that proceeded and followed. And you rose up from your knees, feeling that you knew the mind of the Spirit there, and had got a step forward in scriptural knowledge.

You remember the day, some of you, when you first learned the doctrines of grace. When we were first converted, we did not know much about them. We did not know whether God had converted us, or we had converted ourselves.

But we heard a discourse one day in which some sentences were used, which gave us a clue to the whole system. And we began at once to see how God the Father planned, and God the Son carried out, and God the Holy Spirit applied. And we found ourselves suddenly brought into the midst of a system of truths which we might perhaps have believed before, but which we could not have clearly stated and did not understand.

Well, the joy of that advance in knowledge was exceeding great. I know it was to me. I can remember well the day and hour when first I received those truths in my own soul, when they were burnt into me, as John Bunyan says, burnt as with a hot iron into my soul.

And I can recollect how I felt I had grown on a sudden from a babe into a man, that I had made progress in scriptural knowledge from having got a hold once for all of the clue to the truth of God. Well, now, in that moment when God the Holy Spirit increased your knowledge and opened the eyes of your understanding,

you had the earnest that you shall one day see, not through a glass darkly, but face to face, and by and by you shall know the whole truth, even as you are known. But further than this, to put two or three thoughts into one for brevity's sake, whenever, Christian, thou hast achieved a victory over thy lusts, whenever, after hard struggling, thou hast laid a temptation dead at thy feet, thou hast had in that day and hour a foretaste of the joy that awaits thee when the Lord shall shortly tread Satan under thy feet.

That victory in the first skirmish is the pledge and the earnest of the triumph in the last decisive battle. If thou hast overcome one foe, thou shalt overthrow them all. If the walls of Jericho have been dismantled, so shall every fort be carried, and thou shalt go up a conqueror over the ruins thereof.

And when, believer, thou hast known thy security in Christ, when thou hast been able to say, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him, when you felt sure that earth and heaven might reel, but His love could never pass away, when you have sung out the strong lines of Toplady, my name from the palms of His hands eternity will not erase, impressed on His heart it remains in marks of indelible grace, when you could put your foot upon a rock and feel that you stood securely, knowing that you were safe in Him, and because He lived, you must live also. In that hour you had the pledge and the foretaste of that glorious security which should be yours, when you are beyond gunshot of the infernal fiend, beyond even the howlings of the infernal dog. O Christian, there are many windows to heaven through which God looks down on thee, and there are some windows through which thou mayest look up to Him.

Let these past enjoyments be guarantees of thy future bliss. Let them be to thee as the grapes of Eshcol were to the Jews in the wilderness. They were the fruit of the land, and when they tasted them they said, It is a land that floweth with milk and honey.

These enjoyments are the products of Canaan. They are handfuls of heavenly flowers thrown over the wall. They are bunches of heaven's spices brought to thee by angels' hands across the stream.

Heaven is full of joys like these. Thou hast but a few of them. Heaven is strewn with them.

There thy golden joys are but as stones. Thy most precious jewels are as common as the pebbles of the brook. Now thou drinkest drops, and they are so sweet that thy palate doth not soon forget them.

But there thou shalt put thy lips to the cup and drink, but never drain it dry. There thou shalt sit at the wellhead and drink as much as thou canst draw and draw as much as thou canst desire. Now thou seest the glimmerings of heaven as a star twinkling from leagues of distance.

Follow that glimmering, and thou shalt see heaven no more as a star, but as the sun which shineth in its strength. Permit me to remark yet once more. There is one foretaste of heaven which the Spirit gives, which it were very wrong for us to omit.

And now I shall seem, I dare say, to those who understand not spiritual mysteries, to be as one that dreams. There are moments when the child of God has real fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. You know what fellowship between man and man means.

There is as real a fellowship between the Christian and Christ. Our eyes can look on Him. I say not that these human optics can behold the very flesh of Christ, but I say that the eyes of the soul can here on earth more truly see Christ after a spiritual sort than ever eyes of man saw Him when He was in the flesh on earth.

Today your head may lean upon the Savior's bosom. Today He may be your sweet companion, and with the spouse you may say, Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for His love is better than wine. I pray you, think not that I rave now.

I speak what I do know, and testify what I have seen, and what many of you have seen and known too. There are moments with the believer when, whether in the body or out of the body, he cannot tell. God knoweth.

But this he knows, that Christ's left hand is under his head, and His right hand doth embrace him. Christ hath shown to him His hands and His side. He could say with Thomas, My Lord and my God, but he could not say much more.

The world recedes. It disappears. The things of time are covered with a pall of darkness.

Christ only stands out before the believer's view. I have known that some believers, when they have been in this state, could say with the spouse, Stay me with apples. Comfort me with flagons, for I am sick of love.

Their love of Christ, and Christ's love to them, had overcome them. Their soul was something in the state of John, whom we described last Lord's Day morning. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.

A sacred faintness overcomes my soul. I die. I die to prove the fullness of redeeming love, the love of Christ to me.

O these seasons! Talk ye not of feasts, ye sons of mirth. Tell us not of music, ye who delight in melodious sound. Tell us not of wealth and rank and honor and the joys of victory.

One hour with Christ is worth an eternity of all earth's joys. May I but see him! May I but see his face! But behold his beauties! Come winds, blow ye away all earthly joys I have. This joy shall well content my soul.

Let the hot sun of tribulation dry up all the water brooks. But this fresh spring shall fill my cup full to the brim. Yea, it shall make a river of delight, wherein my soul shall bathe.

To be with Christ on earth is the best, the surest, the most ecstatic foretaste and earnest of the joys of heaven. Forget not this, Christian. If thou hast ever known Christ, heaven is thine.

And when thou hast enjoyed Christ, thou hast learned a little of what the bliss of futurity shall be. I do not doubt also that on dying beds men get foretastes of heaven which they never had in health. When death begins to pull down the old clay house, he knocks away much of the plaster, and then the light shines through the chinks.

When he comes to deal with our rough garment of clay, he pulls it to rags first. Then it is we begin to get a better view of the robes of righteousness, the fair white linen of the saints, with which we are always covered, though we know it not. The nearer to death, the nearer to heaven with the believer.

The more sick, the nearer he is to health. The darkest part of his night is indeed the dawning of the day. Just when he shall think he dies, he shall begin to live.

And when his flesh drops from him, then is he preparing to be clothed upon with his house which is from heaven. Children of God in dying have said wonderful things, which it were scarcely lawful for us to utter

here. It needs the stillness of the room, the solemn silence of the last hour, the failing eye, the choked utterance, the pale thin hand to put a soul into their utterances.

I remember when a Christian brother who had often preached with me the gospel was sore sick and dying. He was suddenly smitten with blindness, which was a first premonition of the approach of death. And he said to me, And when ye see my eye-strings break, how sweet my moments roll, a mortal paleness on my cheek, but glory in my soul.

And said it with such emphasis as a man who, but two or three minutes after, stood before his God, that I can never read those lines without feeling how well the poet must have foreseen a death like his. Ay, there are mystic syllables that have dropped from the lips of dying men that have been priceless as richest pearls. There have been sights of heaven seen in the midst of Jordan, which these eyes cannot see until this breast shall be chilled in the dread and cold stream.

All these things that we have mentioned are the fruits of that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. A few minutes only. O God, do Thou help us with all solemnity.

I utter a few sentences upon the black reverse of the joyous picture I have presented to you. There is another world for the wicked as well as for the righteous. They who believe not in Christ are no more annihilated than those who do believe in Him.

Immortality awaits us all. We die, but we die not. We live forever, and if we fear not God, that immortality is the most frightful curse that ever fell on creature.

To linger in eternal death, yet death forever fly. Can we tell what that world of woe is? In vain do we talk to you about the pit that is bottomless, and the fire that never can be quenched, and the worm that dieth not. These are but images, and images which are used so often that we fear they are almost threadbare in your estimation, and you will scarcely give an ear to them.

Listen then. If thou be this day without God and without Christ in the world, thou hast in thyself a few sparks of that eternal fire. Thou hast already been singed by the vehement heat of that furnace, which to some men has been so hot that even when they have passed it on earth, like Nebuchadnezzar's mighty men, they have fallen down, smitten by the heat thereof, ere they came within its flames.

Ungodly, unconverted men have an uneasiness of spirit. They are never contented. They want something.

If they have that, they will want something more. They do not feel happy. They see through the musements which the world presents to them.

They are wise enough to see that they are hollow. They understand that the fair cheek is painted. They know that its beauty is but mere pretense.

They are not befooled. God has awakened them. They are sensible enough to know that this world cannot fill a man's heart.

They know that an immortal spirit is never to be satisfied with mortal joys. They are uneasy. They wish to kill time, but it hangs heavy on their hands.

They wish they could sleep three and twenty hours out of the torn four and twenty, and drink half the day. They try, if they cannot find some pleasure to wake up their energies, some new device, some novelty, even though it were novelty of sin, which might give a little excitement to a palate which has lost all power to be pleased. Now when a man gets into that uneasy state, he may make a guess of what hell will be.

It will be that uneasiness intensified, magnified to the extreme, to wander through dry places, seeking rest and finding none, always thirsting, but never having a drop of water to cool that thirst, hungering, but feeding upon wind and hungering still, longing, yearning, groaning, sighing, conscious of misery, sensible of emptiness, feeling poverty, but never getting ought whereby that poverty may be made rich, or that hunger may be stayed. Ah, ye uneasy ones, may your uneasiness bring you to Christ! But unconverted men without Christ have another curse, which is a sure foretaste to them of hell. They are uneasy about death.

I have my mind now upon a person who trembles like an aspen leaf during a thunderstorm, and I know another man who could bear a storm very well, but if there be the slightest thing the matter with him, if he has a cough, he fears his lungs are affected, if he feels a little hoarse, he is sure he will have bronchitis and die, and the thought of dying he cannot bear. He will hear you talk about it and crack a joke over it, merely for the sake of covering up his own dismay. He fancies you cannot see through him, but you can plainly discover that he is as afraid of dying as ever he can be.

I know at this moment a family where the governess was instructed when she took the situation, never to mention the subject of death to the children, or else she would be instantly discharged. That fear of dying which haunts some men, not when their blood boils and they are excited, then they could rush to the cannon's mouth, but when they are cool and steady and look at it, when it is not the sword's point and glory, but dying, mere dying, then they shiver. Oh, how these strong men start, and how they quail! Full many an infidel has recanted his infidelity then, given it all up, when he has come to deal with the awful mysteries of death.

But those dreads of death are but the foreshadows of that darker gloom which must gather round your spirit, except you believe in Christ. With some men it has gone even further than this. When a man has long resisted the invitations of the gospel, long gone from bad to worse, from sin to sin, a horror, an unspeakable horror, will seize upon him at times, especially if he be a man who is given to intoxication.

Then a delirium will come upon him, mingled with remorse, which will make his life intolerable. It has been my unhappy lot to see one or two such cases, of persons who have been ill, and have been vexed with fears, fears of the most hideous caste, which you could not remove. You speak to them of Christ.

They say, What have I to do with Him? I have cursed Him hundreds of times. You speak to them about faith in Christ. Faith in Christ, they say.

What is the use of that to me? I am past hope. I am given up, and I do not care about it either. And then they collapse, go back again into that dull despair, which is the sure advance guard of damnation itself.

With these men one may pray. They bid you pray for them, and then they say, Get up, sir. It is of no use.

God will never hear you from me. They will ask you to go home and pray, but assure you that it will be useless to do so. You read the Bible to them.

Don't read the Scriptures, say they. Every text cuts me to the quick, for I have neglected the Word of God, and all my time now is past. You tell them that while the lamp holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return.

No, no, they cannot. You may tell them that there is hope, that Jesus Christ calls many at the eleventh hour. You picture to them the thief on the cross.

No, no, they put far from them all hope and choose their own delusions and perish. Now such men give the gravest picture of what hell must be in these forebodings of the wrath to come. I saw one man now in eternity, and where he is, God knoweth.

I could not describe to you what I saw that day of him. He said that he would not die, and walked up and down as long as there was life in him, under the notion, as he said, that if he could walk about, he knew he should not die. He would not die, he said, he would live, he must live.

I cannot die, said he, for I must be damned if I die. I feel I must. And that poor wretch, sometimes giving ear to your admonitions, then cursing you to your face, bidding you pray, and then blaspheming, dying with hell commenced, with all the horrors of perdition just beginning, a sort of infant perdition, struggling to be born within him.

O may God deliver you from ever knowing this vilest premonition of destruction. And how shall you be delivered but by this? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. For he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.

So saith the Scripture, He that believeth not shall be damned. Trust Christ, and you are saved, be you whom you may. Come to the foot of the cross, and cast yourself where His blood is dropping, and you are saved.

Give your heart to Him, believe in Him, repose your confidence in Him. May the Spirit of God enable you to do this. May He help you to repent of sin, and having repented, may He bring you to Christ as the sin propitiator.

And may you go away this day, saying, I do believe in Christ. My soul rests in Him. And if you can say that, the joy and peace in believing which must follow a simple faith in Christ shall be to you the work of the Holy Spirit of promise and the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.

This message, The Earnest of Heaven, was preached by Charles Haddon Spurgeon on February 3rd, 1861. This is Charles Kelsch inviting you to join me again for another message from the Prince of Preachers.

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