

**I've Got Questions about Heaven**  
**#3 Heaven Busters – Part 2**  
**What's Keeping You from Looking Forward to Heaven?**

Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, May 7, 2006

**Nathan Bierma** writes "Heaven is an odd element of the Christian faith. We profess it to be eternally important and then live as though it doesn't exist. We are runners who fear the finish line. We go through life with little sense of what heaven will be like, and less sense of why we would want to live there. We carry on with our lives, fixated on the here and now, oblivious to the there and then... when you stop and think about it, this is a strange way to live. Heaven is so glorious, and the expanse of eternity so vast, it is a wonder we do not let our minds wander into its mysteries more often, and recognize its reality even in the most mundane moments of our lives."  
- *Bringing Heaven Down to Earth*, Nathan L.K. Bierma, p. 2

**Three Biggest Barriers**  
**Keeping Us from Getting Excited about Heaven**

- I. You're Going to Have to Get Rid of Your Petty Pictures of Heaven
- II. You're Going to Have to Stop Believing Satan's Lies about Heaven

"... in our crisis of hope, we focus on what is immediately in front of us. We live in the short term. Every once in a while, a Sunday morning church service or the funeral of a loved one may shake us into an awareness of the coming of eternal heaven. But we quickly retreat into our ordinary routines... we fail to stay in a constant state of anticipation... hope is not our constant context. As a result, the word heaven is becoming inoperative in contemporary Christianity. If we keep pushing it to the edges of our periphery and emptying it of meaning, sooner or later it will be worthless. 'Like classic cars, some words need to be restored,' says Arthur Roberts in *Exploring Heaven*. 'Heaven is one such word.'" - *Bringing Heaven Down to Earth*, Nathan L.K. Bierma, p. 5-6

**John 8:44** Jesus said of the devil, "... he was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

**Revelation 13:6** tells us the satanic beast "... opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven."

God...

God's People... *and*

God's Place – namely... Heaven.

Satan doesn't have to convince us that heaven doesn't exist... he only needs to strip it of all it's wonder... and glory... and excitement... and spine-tingling pleasure... so that he leaves us with a place of boring... unearthly... tedious floating around... for eternity.

No matter what you're going through – keep heaven in view! That's what Paul was talking about in...

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18** “Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal... **5:2** “For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven... **v. 8** “For we are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”

For the Christian – to die is GAIN – and we need to get that phrase stuck in our mind. Yes – there are losses – but the losses fade to the margins of our lives when the eternal heaven and new earth come into focus with all of it's glory... and perfection... and presence of God.

**Philippians 1:21-25** “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain with you all for your progress and joy of faith.”

But Satan lies to us.

H.G. Wells writes about a tribe in a remote valley surrounded by towering mountains. During a terrible epidemic, all the villagers lose their sight. Eventually, entire generations grow up blind with no awareness of their true condition. They cannot understand the world in which they live and what it looks like... and so they cannot imagine what other places beyond their valley might look like.

**2 Corinthians 3:3-4** “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”

### III. Most Christians Need to Crank Up Their God-given Imagination

**Randy Alcorn** writes, “As long as the resurrected universe remains either undesirable or unimaginable, Satan succeeds in sabotaging our love for heaven.” P. 16

**Randy Alcorn** says, “Discussions of heaven tend to be either hyper-imaginative or utterly unimaginative. Bible believers have tended toward the latter... we need a biblically inspired imagination. We should ask God's help to remove the blinders of our preconceived ideas about Heaven so we can understand Scripture.” P. 17

**Heaven is not a Total Mystery** – so we need to pray like the Psalmist David ...

**Psalm 119:18** “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.”

- Why do so many Christians have the mindset that we can't know... and we shouldn't even try to think about it?

**1 Corinthians 2:9** “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.”

But the next verse (**v. 10**) and following says...

**v. 10-12** “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”

These verses are telling us that God has given us His Spirit to teach us about what He's done for us. It's not a total mystery!

**We're Commanded to Think About it**

**Colossians 3:1-3** “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

It was **Francis Schaeffer** who said...

“The Christian is the really free man – he is free to have imagination. This too is our heritage. The Christian is the one whose imagination should fly beyond the stars.” **Art and the Bible**, Francis Schaeffer, p. 61

And Schaeffer always started with God's revealed truth – the Bible – and so should we... but he exhorted us to let that truth fuel our imaginations. And we're not talking about imagination flying **away from** the truth but flying **upon** the truth.

**Conclusion:**

You need to live with a 'There and Then' mindset... not just a 'Here and Now.'

- Would that change the way you look at your cubicle tomorrow morning at work?
- Would it change the way you feel as you try to drag your sick and dying body out of bed one more time in the morning?

- Would what we've talked about this morning infuse hope into a draining situation that requires long term care – and you have no hope of any cure this side of heaven?
- Would what we've talked about this morning change the way you live in that broken and disappointing marriage... or with that shattered dream of what you'd hoped your children were going to be like... or where your career was going to be at this point?