Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

What We Will Do, Part 1
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 90-18

Now, the question tonight, as you know the whole series on heaven has been basically built around a series of questions, and we've been posing some basic questions and trying to answer them from the Word of God. It's not really a sermon. It's just really kind of a Bible study and that's what it will be tonight. We'll just be looking together at God's Word to see what the answer is. But the question for tonight is: what will the redeemed do in heaven? What will the redeemed do in heaven? It's interesting to read, as I have read six or eight different books on heaven, and looked up various articles, and read various journals, articles and nosed around a little bit in a file that I have with things on heaven that I've collected through the years, and it's curious to see what people think heaven is like. It's also curious to see what people think we're going to do there. Some suggestions have come that what we're going to do in heaven is sit on the edge of a cloud and play a harp. And you've seen that depicted in a kind of a cartoon fashion. Others have suggested that some of us are going to polish the stones in the foundations of the New Jerusalem. And there are a lot of bizarre kinds of things like that.

Some have suggested that we won't do anything at all, that we'll just go to heaven and basically do nothing. It will just be forever rest, forever doing absolutely nothing, which sounds to me like hell not heaven. But nonetheless, there are some who think that's what it's going to be like: just go there and do nothing forever. I can't do nothing for 30 minutes let alone forever. But nonetheless that kind of concept is depicted a little bit in the writings of Rudyard Kipling, no great theologian, who wrote "When earth's last picture is painted and the tubes are twisted and dried, when the oldest colors have faded and the youngest critic has died, we shall rest and faith we shall need it. Lay down for an eon or two till the master of all good workman shall put us to work anew." Well, he gets around to work sooner or later, but it's the eons or two of doing absolutely nothing that bother me, a sort of Rip Van Winkle view of heaven, I guess.

What is it that we will do in heaven? Will it be just eternal nothing? Will we just sort of hang around heaven, strolling and strumming our way through forever? Or, will it be that we will have something to do, something to plan for, some responsibility, some goal and objective that's going to demand all of our powers to put in motion to effect? Now, those are the questions we want to answer.

And I guess part of understanding what we will do in heaven is to first of all understand what we will not do in heave. Are you ready for that? We will not do wrong, and that will eliminate a lot of problems. We will not do wrong. We will not sin; none of us will ever sin any time. We will never have

to confess our sin. We will never have to struggle with sin. We will never have to apologize for anything to anyone, forever. Isn't that wonderful? We will never have guilt. We'll never feel bad about anything. We'll never have to make anything right. We'll never have to write a letter to correct what we said or what we did. We'll never have to clarify anything. We'll never have to call somebody up to explain what we really meant.

We'll never have to straighten out anything that's confused, because nothing will ever be confused, and nothing will ever be wrong, so nothing will ever be straightened out. We'll never have to fix anything. We'll never have to repair anything. We'll never have to adjust anything. Nothing will ever be out of adjustment. We'll never have to replace anything, nothing will ever wear out. Nothing will ever malfunction. We'll never have to help anybody because nobody will ever need any help. We'll never have to deal with Satan. We'll never have to deal with demons. We'll never have to deal with sinners. We'll never have to defend ourselves against attack, we'll never be attacked. We'll never be sad. We'll never cry. We'll never be alone. We'll never be lonely. We'll never be hurt emotionally. We'll never be hurt physically. We'll never need to be cured. We'll never need to be counseled. We'll never need to be coddled. We'll never need to be entertained.

We'll never be less that totally filled with absolute joy. We will never have to do anything special to anyone any time because everything we do will be special to everybody all the time. We will never grieve. We will never lose anyone, lose anything, miss anyone. We will never have to be careful because we couldn't make a mistake anyway. We will never have to plan for contingencies or emergencies. There will never be a "plan B". We will never have to avoid danger, there will be no danger. It's incredible to think about all that, isn't it? I just sat down with my pen and started writing all of that out. About ten minutes later I had what I just gave you. And that's just a start. What we've been saying in summing up the essence of heaven is, that it is perfect holy bliss with unmixed and unending joy, in perfected body and soul, dwelling with the Lamb and with God in intimate fellowship and vision forever. That's heaven.

But, what will we do? We won't do these things, but what will we do? Well, I don't want to disappoint you but I can't be specific about what you will do, and I can't even be specific about what I will do because the Lord hasn't chosen to reveal that to us. But in general, we can be somewhat specific about what we'll all do categorically.

Let me give you some suggestions. Number one, we will adore God and Christ. We will spend forever adoring God and Christ. Let's call that worship. Heaven will be the place of eternal loving adoring worship and praise, forever and ever and ever all throughout all eternity without any break or any interruption. We will ever continually and always be praising God. There will never be an interruption to that. There won't be a place where you go to do that because the temple will be heaven and God will be all-in-all and so there won't be a place you go to do that, you will do that all the time without break.

In fact, God's purpose in salvation as clearly delineated in Scripture was to create an eternal group of worshipers. In John, his gospel chapter 4, our Lord says that in talking to the Samaritan woman. He says in John 4 that the Father seeks true worshipers. Salvation is a means to an end, and the end is that there might be men and women who will spend forever adoring, praising, worshiping God. God's purpose in salvation was to choose a group of worshipers. Philippians 3:3, we are those who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. We're the true worshipers.

So, when we go to heaven we will worship. We will praise God. We will have, as we have already noted, perfect knowledge, that is as perfect as the knowledge of redeemed beings can be. And, we will have perfected knowledge and therefore we will know about God things we don't now know about Him, and we will know about His deeds, things that we don't now know. And in that fullness of knowledge of His attributes and fullness of knowledge of His deeds and fullness of His presence, we will find out of us elicited unending undying unmixed praise. And what thrills me about this is it will be perfect praise. I know my own heart, and you know yours as well, and there are many times when with all my heart I want to praise God but my praise gets cluttered up with all the rest of the stuff that gets in the way. Have you ever found yourself in the midst of praising God and some evil thought comes across your mind or some trivial thought or some silly nonsensical notion falls into your head and interrupts your praise and shows you how really earthbound you are? What a sickening and disgusting thing it is to deal with that. Well, imagine praising God forever, uninterrupted, without ever having an impure motive, without ever having a distraction. Can you imagine that?

We have meets several times during the week. On Mondays, I have a prayer time at the college. We get down on our knees for a prolonged period of prayer. Generally, that prayer time involves some time of praise. We like to read through a Psalm and then offer praise to the Lord. And even in the brief moments of being on my knees and offering praise to God, I find in trying to offer uninterrupted praise to God out of my heart, that praise is always being interrupted by other thoughts. I just can't seem to focus on it. My mind is so diverted, and I sometimes after having set my course to spend my time praising God, go away feeling guilty because my praise was so crippled by my own preoccupations. The time will come in heaven when your praise will come always and uninterruptedly out of a pure heart and a pure motive and without distraction. What an incredible thought.

To really grasp the reality of the purpose of praise in heaven, we need to look to the book of Revelation. So, go to that last book in your Bible and look with me at chapter 14 verses 6 and 7 and I'll give you a little kind of a quick run through Revelation to get a grip on this truth. But in Revelation 14:6 and 7 we have what is sort of a touchstone in this wonderful, wonderful prophetic book. John writes, "And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people. And he said with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give Him glory because the hour of His judgment is come and worship Him who

made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of water.'" Now, here's an angel, this angel is proclaiming the eternal gospel, the everlasting good news. And what is it? Fear God, give Him glory, worship Him. That is the eternal message. That is the gospel. The angel is crying out that universal message: fear God, give Him glory, fear meaning reverence, reverence God, glorify God, worship God, that is what God is calling men to do. And that angel is proclaiming that message. So, that is the gospel. It is the gospel that calls for praise to God.

Now, with that in mind, let's go back earlier into the Book of Revelation and see the emphasis on worship in heaven. Chapter 4 verse 10, the 24 elders, and here the scene is in heaven. We see that from verse 1, a door standing open in heaven, and John is told to come up and see the things taking place. So, the vision is of heaven. And it says the 24 elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne saying, "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for Thou didst create all things and because of Thy will they existed and were created." And there you have a scene in heaven where there is worship. In chapter 5, again, the scene is still in heaven. And we come to verse 8, He had taken the book, the Lamb mentioned in verse 6, and the four living creatures in response and the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp and golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of the saints and they sang a new song. In chapter 4 they're worshiping God. In chapter 5 they're worshiping the Lamb. They say in this new song, "Worthy art Thou to take the book and break its seals for Thou wast slain and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and Thou hadst made them to be a kingdom and priest to our God and they will reign upon the earth. And I looked and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders and the number of them was myriads of myriads," that just almost conveys the idea of limitless numbers and thousands of thousands. "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing, and every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea and all things in them I heard saying to Him that sits on the throne and to the Lamb, Be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever. And the four living creatures kept saying, 'Amen,' which means so let it be, and the elders fell down and worshiped."

Chapter 7 verse 9, "After these things I looked, behold a great multitude which no one could count from every nation and all tribes and people and tongues standing before the throne and before the Lamb clothed in white robes and palm branches were in their hands, and they cry out with a loud voice saying, Salvation to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb. And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God saying, 'Amen,' blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever, amen."

That's heaven, that's what's going on there. Chapter 11 verse 15, "And the seventh angel sounded, there rose loud voices in heaven," and what are they doing? They're saying, "The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and He will reign forever and ever. And the 24 elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God saying, 'We give Thee thanks, O Lord God the Almighty, who art and who wast because Thou hast taken Thy great power and hast begun to reign.'" There again, we see the vision of praise in heaven.

In chapter 15 and verse 2, "And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mixed with fire and those who had come off victorious from the beast, from his image from the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass holding harps of God. And they sang the song of Moses, the bondservant of God, and the song of the Lamb saying, 'Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God the Almighty, righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations, who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy, for all the nations will come and worship before Thee for Thy righteous acts have been revealed.'" And that, too, is a sign, verse 1 says, in heaven.

And over in chapter 19, we find the chapter begins with a great multitude in heaven, speaking in a loud voice, and what is it they say? "Hallelujah," chapter 19 verse 1, "salvation and glory and power belong to our God because His judgments are true and righteous, for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, He has avenged the blood of the His bondservants on her. And the second time they said, 'Hallelujah,' her smoke rises up forever and ever." By the way, they're praising here for judgment. We will praise God eternally not only for His grace but for His judgment. "The 24 elders, the four living creatures fell down, worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, 'Amen, hallelujah.' And the voice came from the throne saying, 'Give praise to our God all you His bondservants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.' And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder saying, 'Hallelujah, for the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.'" That is what we do in heaven. We are preoccupied with praise. An overwhelming emphasis as we look at those scenes in heaven is placed on praise.

By the way, we don't see any indication there will be any prayer in heaven because there won't be anything to pray for. That is the prayer in the sense of petition. But there will be plenty of praise so you might as well practice now; you're going to spend forever doing it. The one who worships God here is going to worship God there. The one who worships God here in imperfection is going to worship God there in absolute perfection. It will be our delight. It will be the highest, noblest expression of our perfected being. We will recognize the splendor of God. We will see clearly the majesty of God. We will comprehend the glory of God. We will grasp the perfection of God. And when all of that is on display eternally before us, we will be constrained into uninterrupted, unrestrained, adoring, loving worship. It will be our delight. Augustine writing in the city of God wrote this, "How great will be that felicity, or that joy, when there will be no evil, when no good will be withheld, when there will be leisure for the praises of God who will be all in all. What other occupation could there be

in a state where there will be no inactivity of idleness, and yet no toil constrained by want? I can think of none." We will literally spend eternity doing what we most want to do which will be to praise God.

Dr. EL Mascall wrote, "The sole justification for praising God is that God is praiseworthy. We do not praise God because it does us good, though no doubt it does. Nor do we praise Him because it does Him good, for in fact it does not. Praise is thus strictly ecstatic, in the sense that it takes us wholly out of ourselves, it is purely and solely directed upon God, praise is entirely directed upon God. It takes our attention entirely off ourselves and concentrates it entirely on Him." That is the value of praise, and praise will be rising out of pure motive which will be pure love. Our love for God will be perfected, we will love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. We will love Him perfectly in a transparent, manifest, luminous worship rising out of the perfection of love. We will give praise to God. Charles Gabriel wrote it in the hymn, "When all my labors and trials are o'er, and I am safe on that beautiful shore, just to be near the dear Lord I adore will through the ages," and then he muffed it, "be glory for me." That won't be glory for you, that will be glory for whom? For God. That chorus of that hymn always bothered me, "O thou will be glory for me." When I was a kid I thought they were singing chloroform me, that would have been a better way to say it, I think. Just to be near the dear Lord I adore, that will be glory for Him. It will be our greatest joy to ascribe glory to God.

So, we will worship. We will adore God forever and ever with all of our creative energies. We will adore Him, I believe, through spoken word. We will adore Him through song. We will adore Him collectively. We will adore Him individually. We will express ourselves through some collective vehicles and we will express ourselves through very intimate and personal vehicles. We will praise God with all of the abilities and capabilities bound up in our perfection. Every way that we in perfect body and soul could adore and praise God, we will do that. We will do that, in thought, in word, in song.

Secondly, not only will we spend eternity adoring the Lord, but we will reign with Him. First, we will adore Him; secondly, we will reign with Him. The first has to do with worship. The second has to do with authority. I believe clearly that the Scripture teaches that we will reign with Christ. And what that means is we will have responsibility. We will have oversight. We will have duties with regard to the ongoing operation of the eternal state. Now, this is an amazing thing to think about. But in this life here, the Lord has given us a role of authority in His church. He has given us responsibility. We have certain duties in this church that we are to carry out. Those offices given to us, those spiritual gifts enabling us to minister in certain ways, those spiritual responsibilities God gives to us are a certain amount of authority that He allows us to have, by delegation, to represent Him in the ongoing work of His church. We do that. We don't do it perfectly. In fact, we do it very imperfectly, but when we get to heaven, I believe He will operate His Kingdom there in much the same way He has operated the Kingdom here. And that is by delegating that operation to His own. There, however, we will all be perfect and our operation within that delegated authority will be perfect as well. And so, we will then in that time in that place, when we go to be with Him and dwell forever in eternity, be given a sphere of

responsibility, a sphere of authority within the ongoing of that kingdom for which we will be eternally responsible.

And the wonderful thing about it is we will never fail to fulfill our responsibility. We won't be like Peter who being continually given responsibility continually faced the fact that he failed, and finally wanted to bail completely out of the ministry, I think partly because he couldn't stand his own failure. Every time he was given an opportunity to come through, he blew it. We don't have to deal with that in eternity like we do now. I don't know how you are but I live with a certain amount of self-imposed pressure and I also live with a certain amount of God-provided pressure. I'm sure I live with some self-imposed guilt for failing to live up to my self-imposed pressure. But I also know that I live with some real guilt because I don't fulfill what God wants me to do. I always have this lingering feeling that I'm wasting time and energy no matter how much I'm doing, because it seems to me such a precious commodity to be called to serve Christ in this world, and I want to make the most of it, and I chasten myself frequently for failures to use wisely or to the maximum the energy in the time that I have. It will be so wonderful to be in a situation someday where whatever it is the Lord gives me to do, I'll do it perfectly. Isn't that going to be wonderful? What a sense of satisfaction. I'll trade in the sense of failure gladly for the sense of satisfaction.

I don't know if you know how I feel generally about ministry. I don't often say much about it. But I would say, generally speaking, you try to keep in balance the fact that God gives you success and failure, allows failure to come. He gives you the success and your part is to provide the failure, really, I mean that's what happens with humanness. God gives you the success and you put the failure in there. But it seems to me that in ministry no matter how much success you have, you're constantly under the burden of the failure. It's never what you want it to be. The church is never what all that you want it to be. Your message is never all that you want it to be. The book you write is never all that you want it to be. The class you teach, whatever it is you put your hand to, you're always living with this sense of, "Well, it's good and thank God for what He did but it could have been so much more than that. So much more." So, the time will come when we'll be given a sphere of authority. That is, we will reign with Christ in some dimension.

Now, let's kind of examine that for a minute. Look at 1 Peter chapter 1. Now, we'll poke our nose into this thought. I can't be too explicit about this because I'm not sure the Lord has given us enough revelation to draw some hard and fast dogma, but let me give you a suggestion here. First Peter 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Verse 4, "In order to obtain," is the idea, "an inheritance." Okay, we've been saved to obtain an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, will not fade away and is being reserved in heaven for us right now. So, we have an inheritance in heaven right now. It's there. It's waiting for us. It's reserved for us. It will never fade away. It is imperishable. It's our inheritance.

What is that? Do you ever think about that? I've been thinking about that a lot. What is that? Well, I think it could be that our inheritance has to do with the sphere of our authority. Okay? The range of our co-reigning with Christ. It seems to me that that's basically what an inheritance is. An inheritance is something you receive from someone else. Some would look at it from the standpoint of a firstborn son. He inherits what his father left. He would enter in to the inheritance of his father. It seems best in the Jewish context to see the inheritance as that sphere of responsibility, that sphere of rule, that over which I have responsibility and for which I have authority. My inheritance is whatever my father delegated to me. That's my sphere of responsibility. That's what I'm responsible for. That's what I'm to be a steward of. And so, the inheritance could well be the sphere of our authority. Surely it would include that. Yes, there's a sense in which our inheritance includes eternal life, and our inheritance includes heaven, and it includes holiness, and it includes joy and peace, and the presence of God, and all of that.

But in Romans 4:13 it says that we are heirs of the world. And in Romans 8:17 it says we're joint heirs with Christ. Now, Christ was not an heir to eternal life; He had eternal life. He was not an heir to joy; He had joy. He was not an heir to peace; He had peace. He was not an heir to holiness; He had holiness. He was not an heir to heaven; heaven was where He came from. What He was an heir to, was this world. He was an heir to a sphere of rule. He was heir to this world. To keep that in perspective, Psalm 2 verse 8, "Ask of Me and I'll give the nations as Thine inheritance." That's the Father speaking to the Son. Christ's inheritance was not heaven, it wasn't holiness, it wasn't peace, it wasn't joy. He had all that. His inheritance was a sphere of authority, rule over nations, rule over the world, rule over angels, fallen demons, holy angels. And I believe that the idea that I'm a joint heir with Christ then emphasizes that there's a sphere of authority, of ruling, of responsibility for me.

In Revelation, also, just to follow that thought a little further, Revelation chapter 5, "And I saw on the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside on the back sealed with seven seals," this is the title deed to the earth, "I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who's worthy to open the book, to break its seals?' No one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or look into it." This is the title deed to the earth. So, Christ had the right to break all those seven seals. That's why you have in the unfolding of the judgments in the Tribulation seven seals; it's the unfolding of that scroll that gives Him the title deed to the earth. So, Christ's inheritance again is the title deed to the earth. When no one is found who can open it, verse 4, "I began to weep greatly," writes John, "because no one is found worthy to open the book or look into it. And one of the elders said to me, Stop weeping, behold the lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has overcome so as to open the book in its seven seals." And then, in verse 6 the Lamb is there and the Lamb is ready to do that.

So, Christ then unrolls the scroll that is the title deed to the earth. Christ was not an heir to eternal life. He was not an heir to heaven, but He was an heir to the nations. He was an heir to the earth. So, I

believe we will reign with Christ over the nations; we will reign with Christ over the earth in the eternal state. Now, I don't know specifically how that works out for every individual and what our duties will be, but we will have authority. In Revelation 22:5 it talks about those of us who are in heaven. And it says, "They shall not have need of the light of the lamp or the light of the sun because the Lord God will illumine them and they shall reign forever and ever." They shall reign forever and ever. We will reign. We have an inheritance. And I think if you want to narrow it down, although you could take the general view, and I think you wouldn't be wrong, and say our inheritance is all that heaven is, I think more specifically our inheritance could focus on that sphere of authority, of dominion, of ruling, of responsibility, that stewardship over which we are the leader, the ruler, the authority. That's wonderful. I believe in eternity, now get it this way, we will have ongoing and eternal responsibility for some portion of God's eternal kingdom. That's the essence, perhaps, of our inheritance.

First Corinthians 6, do you remember we looked at it earlier? And it tells us another dimension of that authority; it says in verse 3, "Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more matters of this life?" We're going to have some authority over angels. We're going to have some responsibility over them. Each of us is going to be given that kind of responsibility.

In Matthew, a couple of things I'd like to show you, turn to Matthew. We may not get beyond this, but I do want to take a moment to show you. Matthew has several things to say. Verse 28 of chapter 19, Jesus says, "Truly, I say to you, that you who have followed Me," that is you who are My disciples, who believe in Me, "in the regeneration," that is in the rebirth in the kingdom, I believe He's referring to, "when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel." Now, the only people that I can find in Scripture who are explicitly given their assigned inheritance or sphere of authority in heaven are those 12. The Apostles are told that they will reign over the 12 tribes. They have their position defined. The rest of us are just told we have an inheritance. There will be a sphere of responsibility, a sphere of rulership where we co-reign with Christ forever and ever.

So, when you look at heaven we will spend forever and ever and ever praising the Lord. We will also have some area of responsibility over which we have authority and for which we are to fulfill a duty. We will rule with perfection. We will not shirk the responsibility, we will fulfill it perfectly. To kind of fill out our understanding of this, there are a couple of passages we ought to look at further. Matthew chapter 25, and I'm trying to touch a little lightly on these things but we want you to grasp it. Matthew 25 is the very familiar parable starting in verse 14 about the man who went on a journey and left talents, five talents to one servant, two to another and one to the last. And just notice in verse 21, the master comes back and finds the first guy has used his talent and multiplied it. The second guy used it and multiplied it. And the third guy wasted it. But in verse 21, his master said to him, "Well, done, good and faithful slave, you were faithful with a few things," notice this, "I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master."

Now, I believe in great measure what you have there is a picture of heaven. Heaven for the faithful person who made the most of his gospel privilege, who responded to the opportunity to come to Christ, who embraced the truth, the promise to him is that he will be put in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master. Heaven is unending joy, unmixed joy. But heaven is also being put in charge of many things, a position of ruling. Notice this, please, is in proportion to the spiritual dimension of this life. Now, follow that thought. The more faithful you are in this life, the more responsibility you were given and fulfilled in this life, the more in the life to come. Somehow, our position of ruling in heaven is in proportion to faithfulness in this life.

Now, that means that, you say, “Well, what if God only gave you five and you doubled it, and God only gave you two and you doubled it, how is that different?” Well, God is fair and God is equitable, and God is just, but God is also sovereign. And God has chosen in this life to give people greater gospel privilege, greater ministry than others by His sovereign choice. And in eternity God will do the same and that’s His sovereign purpose. There will be no sense of loss, no sense of relative comparison, for all of us will be perfect and perfect people would never ever be jealous, prideful, boastful, envious, or any of those things. So, we have unequal privilege here. We have unequal opportunity here. Listen, some people heard the gospel when they were six and seven years old and have loved Christ, walked with Christ for years and years and years. Some people came to Christ a week before they died. And you can ask the same question, was God fair in letting that person live a whole life in sin and the flesh and corruption before saving them in the end? That’s not the question. The question is that God is sovereign and He has a right to do what He will do and we shouldn’t ask such things. The potter does what the potter chooses. The clay doesn’t ask the questions.

So, God giving, in terms of privilege somewhat, at least to our view, unequal privilege here and fulfilling that privilege, we find ourselves in unequal areas of responsibility here, we shouldn’t be shocked to find the same will happen in eternity. I’m not going to rule over any tribe of Israel. I’m not going to have that big a sphere of influence. But the 12 apostles are. It isn’t a question of better or worse, it’s a question of God’s design for each and every one of us. We all have different capacities and God will fulfill those capacities according to His predetermined creative and redemptive plan for us. What you will be is exactly what God wanted you to be in utter perfection and Christ’s likeness. What you will do will be exactly what God created you and recreated you to do in exact perfection. You will be the fulfillment of everything God intended for you, and that’s all you could want to be anyway.

So, we will be all we can be in glory. I hear that all the time with the Army on the commercial on TV, “Be all you can be.” Now, I want you to know something. The Army will never be able to do that. They cannot make anybody all they could be. Only God can make you all you can be. But that ought to be the commercial. “Be all you can be, go to heaven.” That’s where you’ll be all you can be. And I believe this is a picture of heaven because the comparative, if you go down to the end of the parable,

the one talent man, when the Lord confronts this guy, verse 30, He says, “Cast out the worthless slave into outer darkness.” What’s that a picture of? Hell. The contrast here is where one is in hell and where the other two are in heaven. Heaven is the place of the joy of the Lord, and I will put you over many things. I believe we have a place of authority, a place of ruling, a place of reigning in heaven.

Luke 19, here again this teaching of our Lord comes through the parable, “A nobleman went into the country, called ten of his slaves, gave them ten minas,” and so forth. Basically the same concept. You go down to verse 15, “It came about when he returned after receiving the kingdom, he ordered these slaves to whom he had given the money to be called in in order that he might know what business they had done. The first appeared saying, ‘Master, your mina has made ten minas more.’“ In other words, he multiplied what he was given, that is he used his gospel opportunity. He responded to God’s call in his life. He, to put it simply, became a believer and filled out his opportunity, his spiritual privilege. “Well, done,” verse 17, “good slave. Because you have been faithful in very little thing, be in authority over ten cities.” And to the one who was given less, the second one came, he said, “I made five minas. He said, You be over five cities.” And again I think those are pictures of heaven that we will reign over certain areas of responsibility. We will have authority.

So, that’s what heaven’s going to be like. It’s going to be a place where we have unending, unceasing, unmitigated and pure praise riding out of hearts, rising out of hearts filled with love that is pure and unmixed. And coupled with that, we will reign. We will have a responsibility to rule a certain sphere. Notice in Revelation 3:21, this is the last scripture we’ll look at. I won’t go any further tonight because I don’t want to get into the next section, it’s too rich, I’ll save it for next time; we couldn’t get through it. Verse 21, well verse 20, you know the familiar word here to the Laodicean Church, “Behold I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears My voice, opens the door, I’ll come into him and dine with him and he with Me.” Then, verse 21 referring here to a believer, “He who overcomes,” a believer is an overcomer, 1 John tells us that, “Who is he that overcomes? It’s the one who believes, that which overcomes is our faith,” John says. So, the believing person is the overcomer. “To him,” it says, “I will grant to sit down with Me on My,” what? “Throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” So, there is definitely an emphasis, a very, very strong emphasis on this matter of ruling, of having authority.

Now, let me just sum it up, beloved. Heaven is not going to be a place where you sit on the edge of a cloud and play a harp. Heaven is not going to be a place where you just hang around, you stroll the golden streets. It’s not going to be one massive celestial garden where you’re just forever picking flowers. It’s not going to be that. It’s not going to be anything like you think it’s going to be, at least like most people think it’s going to be. Heaven is going to be a place, now listen to this thought, where you will be busier than you have ever been. You will have authority. You will have responsibility. You will have duty. And the wonderful part about it is: you will do it to perfection, get this one, and never grow weary. Isn’t that wonderful? You’ll never sleep. You never need to sleep. You don’t need to sleep because your body isn’t running down. Your body will never be tired. You will never go home to

your place in the Father's house and say, "What a hard day, I'm taking tomorrow off." There will be no days off. Forever you will rule in your sphere of authority. Forever, you will fulfill that inheritance which God has given you. You will never be weary. You will rest forever but you will rest while you are doing that which God has called you to do.

Now, let me tell you something. That, to me, is really appealing. People sometimes say to me, "Well, you need rest." If you mean that I need to do nothing, that does not help me. Doing nothing is very difficult. Now, if you were to say, "You need to do something different," that's good. Whenever I take a vacation or a rest, I don't want to do nothing; I want to do something different. But there's something built into me, something the way I think people are made that there is a drive in us to excel, to accomplish, to do, to have a sense of a goal and an objective and a purpose and a sphere of responsibility. And don't we say one of the greatest human pleasures is the sense of satisfaction over a job what? Well done? Of course. And I believe what you're going to have in heaven forever is just doing jobs to perfection, and you'll be able to smile in the very presence of God and know that every single thing you do in the sphere of your sovereignty, your delegated authority, is done to absolute perfection. And in a sense, that will be a little part of what you offer God in praise.

Isn't that a great thing to think about? You're not going to be just hanging around for eons. You're not going to be just at leisure with no responsibility. You're going to have a sphere of responsibility that will occupy your perfect mind to its limits, that will tax your mental capacities to their limits. Your ability to strategize and to think will all be exercised in perfection. All the best that you can possibly be, you will be, and you will function to accomplish tasks that you never dreamed possible, but you will do those things with great ease. You will do them at rest, in a sense. That's sort of paradoxical, but that's what the Scripture indicates.

So, when you get to heaven you're going to have some responsibility. The measure of that responsibility, I believe, if you look carefully at these scriptures, is somehow related to the measure of giftedness God's given you here because you, are in a sense, in part what you will be then. And God has gifted us differently. Some of you have been gifted in a certain way here and somehow, in eternity, your sphere of influence and responsibility will correlate to the way you've been gifted here. That's just the way it's going to be.

Also, I might add, the level of your faithfulness here will correlate to the extent of your authority there. So, what you do here, in a sense, is rewarded there by the nature of the inheritance you receive. You really are then, by the way you live, laying up treasure there. In a sense right now by the way you live as a Christian are establishing what you're going to do in eternity. And I don't know about you, but I want to do all I can throughout eternity to glorify God, and I want to make sure that I don't waste my privilege here and not get the fullness of capacity given there. That's what we'll do in heaven.

That’s not all, folks. Would you believe that I didn’t get through this message or near? Of course you would, because that’s pretty routine. But I get overwhelmed by these things. In fact, you know, somebody said, “Well, how many notes to you take?” Well, I probably had about six pages of notes and covered two, because when I begin to think about these things and they begin to grab my heart as they’ve been doing for the last couple of weeks, I find myself enthralled. That’s the adventure of preaching, how you can talk for 50 minutes or 55 minutes off of five sentences. But it’s because the Lord puts so much in, those things just trigger all these wonderful thoughts.

We’re going to find another dimension next Lord’s day evening. We’re going to worship. We’re going to reign. Next week I’m going to show you something about what we’re going to do in terms of service. We’re going to serve the Lord. Now, let me give you a little hint: I believe that the sphere of your reign is related to the idea of your inheritance. And I believe also that your service there is related to your service here. In other words, your reward in heaven, not a literal thing you stick on your head or a big badge you wear on your eternal robe, you know, class A, blue ribbon, no. Your reward in heaven is very likely going to be the category, nature, and extent of your service, so that your reward will be what you do in serving the Lord. But there’s another dimension to it that I’m not even going to tell you about that I’ll explain to you next time, and that’s what Christ is going to do for you in heaven. So, don’t miss it. Let’s pray.

When we think about these things, Father, it just pulls us loose from our moorings in this life, and that’s good because we really don’t even want to be a part of this world any longer than we need to be. We are privileged, yes, to be able to proclaim Your truth, to call people back from sin. But, Lord, it’s certainly our desire to be with You, to enter into the presence of the one we love, the one we serve, to receive the inheritance that is reserved for us. We thank You for that wonderful hope, for the knowledge that we have that faithfulness in this life provides for us an eternal weight of glory, an eternal weight of glory. What a wonderful thought that is. So, Lord, we look forward to the time when we can worship You with unhindered heart, mind, voice, body. We look forward to that time when we enter into the sphere of our authority, our responsibility, the area in which we will co-reign in delegated authority under You and under Christ. And as we shall learn next time, Lord, we long for the time when we will serve You in perfect service with never a failure, never a lack, and we’ll do it forever and ever and ever. Only without the sense of time for there will be no time there, but only in constant joy, overwhelmed by the privilege of being in Your presence. Father, help us to live in the heavenlies, to set our affections there, that we may do what pleases You for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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