

A Vision of Heaven

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[0 : 00] My name's Jono, and if you're new or visiting, you need to know that we're in the middle of a really important series, a preaching series on eternity. And for the last four weeks, Wayne here has been preaching to us about the reality of hell, that hell is a real place that exists and will exist for eternity.

And my pleasure for the next three weeks is to speak about heaven. I get to speak about heaven from the book of Revelation, the last two chapters. And tonight I'm going to be speaking about the picture of heaven that Revelation gives us.

I'm going to be speaking from that passage that we just heard. I'm just going to preach verse by verse all the way through. That's the way I like to do it. It's kind of a topical series, but I think we should just take a while to look at each verse in Revelation so that we can understand it, gain a full understanding of what God is saying to us.

And so tonight is about a picture of heaven, a vision of heaven that God gives us in this chapter 21. And so what I want to do for the first two minutes is get you to get into groups of about four or five.

I know when I heard this when I was growing up in church, I started to cringe. It's okay, everyone's really friendly here. Four or five people get into groups and I want you to discuss with each other what your vision of heaven is.

[1 : 17] When you think about heaven, what is the picture that comes to mind? You've got two minutes because I've had three hours sleep and about four Red Bulls and I could go on for two or three hours. So you've got two minutes.

Groups of four or five, what is your picture of heaven? Go. All right, time is up, officially up. Stop talking about heaven.

It's my turn. I want to encourage you to keep thinking about these things that have been raised in these groups because in the third week and final week, when we look at the last few verses of Revelation, I promise you I'm going to do a short sermon.

No longer than 45 minutes. Real short. And then we're going to have a panel discussion. So we're going to have a few people up the front here who pretend to know about this kind of thing.

And you will have the opportunity to stand up and ask questions that have been raised over the last seven weeks by that time about hell and heaven. Okay, so keep your brain ticking over about this kind of thing because you'll have an opportunity to ask us all about it.

[2 : 27] So the statement I want to make first of all tonight is that most views of heaven are wrong in the world today.

Most ideas, most of the ideas that you hear about heaven are wrong. I want to give you a little sample of thoughts about heaven from world religions to begin with.

This is from religionfacts.com. All right, first we've got the Baha'i faith. They reckon when you die, your soul separates from the body and begins a journey towards or away from God.

So heaven or hell are merely states of being. If you're traveling towards God in your disembodied state, that's a bit more like heaven. The other way, that's not so good. That's a bit like hell.

That's wrong. Okay, next. Buddhism. They believe in reincarnation. It's slightly different from the Hindu belief in reincarnation, but pretty much you keep reincarnating when you die until you gain enlightenment.

[3 : 31] But here's the thing. If you're a frog or a New Zealander or something terrible like that, how do you gain enlightenment? Interesting question.

Christian science. These are not Christians, by the way. They've hijacked this name. Christian science. Heaven is not a locality, but a divine state of mind in which all the manifestations of mind are harmonious and immortal.

That's wrong too. We'll see why in a second. Epicureanism. Still big today. Think about Epicureanism. If you know anything about it, you'll think about Greek philosophy.

It's ancient. It's alive and well today. We've got it in our newspaper in The Age on Saturday mornings, I think, or Sunday. Worship of food. Worship of worldly things.

So they say there's no afterlife. The soul dissolves when the body dies. That's not too much fun. No afterlife. Same with the atheists and quite a few of these beliefs.

[4 : 34] Jehovah's Witnesses. Right. If you are a Jehovah's Witness, there's space in heaven for 144,000 people. So you better be quick. And eternity is on new earth.

That sounds right. For other Witnesses, all others are annihilated. So there's no hell. If you're not a Jehovah's Witness, you're just gone. That's wrong too.

Okay. Mormonism. This is a weird one, I've got to tell you. This was invented by a guy, for sure. This is a man's religion right here.

Yeah, surname Smith, so it can't be all bad. But his idea of heaven, thank you, is that we all return to a spirit world for a period of instruction before the resurrection.

Mormons go to heaven with God and their families. Others are kind of rewarded, depending on how good you were, to differing degrees, but not in heaven. Everyone who rejects God after death goes to hell.

[5 : 37] And if you're a guy, you get your own planet, you become a god, and you get to just impregnate a wife or many wives for eternity. So they populate the planet for eternity, baby after baby, which is a pretty hard deal on the women, like eternal stretch marks, eternal morning sickness, and the guy gets his own planet.

Sounds alright, but I don't think it's true. What else have we got? Taoism. This, I don't know what this means. When you die, you revert back to the state of non-being, which is simply the other side of being.

Lastly, wicker. Any witches in the crowd tonight? No? No witches? Alright, well, for wicker, there is reincarnation until you reach the summer land.

Which sounds pretty good to me. If there's a land, an eternal land of summer, I'm all for that, but the reincarnation bit, I get lost again. How do you, like how do you, once you're down the bottom, if you're a flea, how do you get back?

I don't know. There's some of the world religion ideas of heaven, and they're all wrong. All wrong. Even worse, I think, is the secular idea of heaven today.

[6 : 54] I've got a couple of quotes. Great band, Counting Crows. I love this band. I've seen them twice, overseas and in Melbourne. They've got a great song. It's called The Rain King, and it's rubbish.

Okay, it says, this is his picture of heaven. When I think of heaven, I think of flying down into a sea of pens and feathers and all other instruments of faith and sex and God in the belly of a black-winged bird.

Black-winged bird. When I think of heaven, I think of dying. Lay me down in a field of flame and heather. Render up my body into the burning heart of God in the belly of a black-winged bird.

Heaven isn't a black-winged bird, and that's just really weird, I think. Finally, we go to the most weird. That was about a six. This is an eleven because it comes from our good friend Britney Spears.

Who likes Britney these days? No one's going to admit it. She's coming back, apparently. Anyway, she's a profound theologian, and she told German magazine Cinema that she has a pretty clear conception of God.

[8 : 10] In heaven, she says, everyone is at peace and happy. Sounds good. Sounds right. And they all hop around from cloud to cloud. In heaven, you can see your grandparents and everyone you loved once again, and an old man with a long white beard wanders around. That's God. Just so you know, that's not right either. Have you seen the Philadelphia ads? Cream cheese? The most annoying ads on the TV. A couple of chicks with feathers sitting on a cloud arguing over who should have the, you know, should we have the low-fat Philadelphia today?

I don't want to put on any weight. Looking at the hot angels going past. It's so annoying. It's so untrue. Firstly, no one's going to be grossly obese in heaven.

We're all going to be perfectly healthy. And I tell you what, this is just a word to the ladies. Our perfect bodies in heaven aren't going to look like the photos of girls that you see on magazines and in movies today, either.

[9 : 14] They're not going to look like, you know, skeletons with big lips because they're going to be perfect. Am I right, guys? Can I get an amen on that? I don't know where the world's going with that picture of the ideal woman.

It's just so annoying. That's not what it's going to be like in heaven. So all these ideas, the point of all of that is that all of these pervasive ideas today are wrong. And I'll tell you why they're wrong. The main reason they're wrong and the thing that unites all of those ideas is that they all omit Jesus from the picture.

Did you pick that up? The main thing that heaven is about, the main thing that revelation is about is Jesus. Jesus.

Any picture of heaven that doesn't have Jesus is not biblical. It's not true. It's not heaven. It would be hell. I tell you what, I see in myself this desire to be in a heaven without Jesus for some reason.

Or at least the picture that I've had growing up is about a heaven with no Jesus. And it's not because I wasn't taught right, because I really was. But I'll tell you what, I'll tell you a story. When I was a kid, my mum died.

[10 : 47] It was terrible. And so I've thought about heaven a lot growing up, right? When you lose someone who's close to you, you think about heaven a lot. But the problem with my picture of heaven growing up was that it was all about her and not about Jesus.

That's the wrong picture of heaven. Yes, Britney Spears is right. We will be reunited with our loved ones who love Jesus. My mum loved Jesus. And I'll be reunited with her.

I will see her and embrace her. And that's going to be unbelievable. But if the picture is about her and not about Jesus, then it's the wrong picture. Are you hearing me?

Over the next three weeks, we're going to hear a lot about Jesus from Revelation.

You tell people that you're doing a talk from Revelation and everyone freaks out. Oh, not Revelation. It's weird. There's beasts and dragons and all kinds of bowls. Who knows what's going on?

[11 : 56] I tell you what, Revelation isn't complicated. It's very simple when you boil it down. It's about Jesus. So we're going to see that over the next three weeks.

I want to jump into this passage now. So make sure you have your Bibles open. Revelation 21, verse 1 to 8. And I would really love to pray for us too before we begin.

Pray that God would teach us from his word. So let's bow our heads. Ask God for help. Dear God, we thank you so much for this picture of heaven that you gave John.

We thank you that he wrote it down and that by some kind of miracle, we have his words and your words here today. We thank you for your word. Ask that you would really convict us tonight.

That your Holy Spirit would be with us, teaching us and training us and giving us a picture of heaven that is utterly captivating.

[12 : 56] Amen. Quick bit of context. The book of Revelation is written by the apostle John. He was a disciple of Jesus.

And he received this revelation, he says, from an angel that came from God while he was exiled on an island named Patmos. And God gave him this vision.

He sort of opened up, teared, tore a hole in the curtain of heaven, if you like. And John got to view inside what heaven will be like.

And there is a lot of symbolism that's hard to understand. But the essentials that we can learn from the book of Revelation are so clear.

We're going to see some of them tonight. He says in chapter 1, verse 1, that it's a revelation of Jesus Christ. That's what I've been saying so far.

[13 : 58] It's the revelation of Jesus Christ. So keep that in mind. Let's go to verse 1. We're just going to go verse by verse. He says, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. The first thing we need to know, after the fact that revelation is about Jesus, that heaven is about Jesus, is that heaven will be creation.

Heaven will be creation. A new heavens and a new earth. It will be like this. Tangible.

You'll be able to walk around and move around and there'll be animals and trees and bodies of water. And it'll be creation. Perfected creation. I was speaking to a guy the other day who'd been a Christian for so many years, and he didn't believe this.

That heaven would be creation. I tell you what, I grew up thinking this as well, that heaven would be sort of this vaporous spiritual existence.

[15 : 11] And I was such an idiot. When I was 18, I was such an idiot. And I used to hang out with older people, like 25, 26-year-olds. And I used to hang out in these really arty, dark kind of pubs and smoky places.

And my girlfriend at the time was an artist. And I used to just hang out with these people and wear dark clothes. And I think I was so cool. And I remember one time we were sitting in one of these places and we were talking to someone French or German or British, the only cool people that exist.

And I was like, this guy was a philosophy major, and he started talking about heaven or the afterlife. And I was like, well, you know, heaven is going to be like a crystal clear pond.

Right? And when we die, we're going to be like a drop of water that will disappear into the pond. And it will be one sort of harmonious existence.

Not individual, but corporate. That is crap. But it's what so many people believe today.

[16 : 32] If they don't believe in clouds, they believe in some kind of vaporous, misty kind of existence where we all just are intertwined with one another.

And God is kind of all in all, and we're all in all, and we are wrapped up in Him. And it's absolute rubbish. The creation, heaven is going to be a new creation.

It will be this earth, very much like this earth, only perfected. It's difficult to understand, I think, because John says it's going to be a new earth and a new heaven.

But I think we need to be careful how we understand that. I don't think that we should understand it, that God will take us away to some other solar system, or that this earth will be completely done away with and replaced with a new one.

I think we need to understand it as this creation reborn. Recreated. This earth recreated.

[17 : 39] And the Greek words here are a little bit tricky because there's two words for new in Greek, at least. One's neos, which means new. It's a, you know, I chuck this microphone away and I get a new one.

The other one is kinos. I think. It's been a few months.

Anyhow, it's a slightly different word. And the meaning is slightly different. And we get this meaning of rebirth. So a couple of examples.

You might say a caterpillar goes into the cocoon and comes out as a different being, but it's the same thing. Or if you say, I'm going to get a new car, you don't mean I'm getting a completely different machine.

It's still going to have a steering wheel and tyres and a windshield, but it's better. It's almost perfect, you could say, when you get it new.

[18 : 43] But it's the same thing, only different. I want to read you a couple of quotes, because I think they might be able to explain it better than I can. This is a good book. Heaven, it's called, funnily enough, by Randy Alcorn.

And I want to read a couple of quotes. So bear with me for a sec. He's answering the question, will the old earth be destroyed or renewed?

And there's a quote here from Anthony Hakema. He says, in his redemptive activity, I want you to listen to this, okay? I tune out when people start reading quotes. I want you to listen.

In his redemptive activity, God does not destroy the works of his hands, but cleanses them from sin and perfects them so that they may finally reach the goal for which he created them.

This principle means that the new earth to which we look forward will not be totally different from the present one, but will be a renewal and glorification of the earth on which we live now.

[19 : 52] Got another one. It's by Herman Bavinck. If you're having a son, write that down. Herman Bavinck Smith. That's awesome. He says, according to scripture, the present world will neither continue forever, nor will it be destroyed and replaced by a totally new one.

Instead, it will be cleansed of sin and recreated, reborn, renewed, made whole. That's the new creation.

There's a couple of parallels in scripture that will help us understand even more. Jesus Christ died on a cross, was dead, and then he was raised to new life with a resurrection body.

The thing is, his disciples recognized him. He had the same body in a way. He could eat fish. He could walk around, speak, interact.

He wasn't a ghost, he said. He could touch him. But at the same time, he could walk through a wall or ascend into heaven. His body was not destroyed and replaced with a new one.

[21 : 08] It was resurrected and made new, and it was different and perfect and whole. Same with you and me. When we rise, we get resurrection bodies. And you'll see me in heaven if you're a believer and I'm a believer and you'll say, that's John O. Smith, that's that really weird guy from Holy Trinity.

And you'll be able to recognize me. But we'll have perfect bodies. Same with the earth. It gets recreated, reborn, made whole, made perfect.

Very much the same and yet different. Perfect, sinless. All right. I just want to make one real quick point on the end there because John worries me.

He says, and the sea was no more. Two real quick points. I know many of you really enjoy the sea like I do and this is worrying. If heaven's like this, hmm. But listen, I think this is symbolic, okay, because for these people in the Middle East at that time, the sea represented at least two things.

One was chaos because they would go out on ships as fishermen and they'd never come back because the sea would swallow them up and it was unpredictable and they didn't have weather maps or Google Earth or anything like that.

[22 : 27] So I think what he's saying is chaos is no more. Peace reigns, calm reigns, rhythm reigns. And secondly, the sea for them represented division.

It divided nations. It divided people. It divided races. And so I think what he's saying is in heaven there'll be no more of that division because the picture of heaven that he gives us elsewhere and we'll see this is of people from every nation and every tongue worshipping God together.

No more nations. unity. I think that's what he means by that point. Let's move on to verse 2.

He says, And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Now, to be honest, I don't completely get that verse because I read a lot of books about this and I still don't know what's going on here.

Some people think, I'll take a crack at it, some people think that the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven is a city, a real city and we will live in this city. It's a heavenly city that we'll live in together.

[23 : 49] And other people say that it's actually symbolic of us, the people of God, everyone who's in heaven. And I guess a third one, which could be true, is that it's a city with the people of God in it.

But I think what he's saying, or I think what he means is that it's symbolic of the people of God because he refers to it as a bride adorned for her husband.

Have you heard that before in the Bible? The New Testament talks about us, the people of God, as the bride of Christ. Not a great one for the guys.

We prefer like a Christian soldier or something like that. But it's true, it's in the Bible. We are the bride of Christ. And what he's getting at when the Bible talks about being the bride of Christ is about relationship.

that we are being prepared to be made one in relationship with Jesus in heaven. So I think that's what it's getting at.

[24 : 51] That Jesus is in heaven waiting for us and that God brings the people of God to be with him. And we're going to have a marriage supper. We're going to enjoy a big feast together in heaven and celebrate the fact that we're that close with God.

I think another point, I'll say this too real quick. This is really important because the picture that the Bible gives us of heaven is that it comes down from God.

We don't create it here. You listen for a very short time and you'll hear a lot of messages today in popular culture about creating heaven on earth.

That if only you had enough money or if only you were good looking enough for as long as you had the right job then this could be heaven on earth for you. This could be the great utopia where we would all live in perfect harmony.

It would be just like heaven. And hell today represents the opposite of that. If you're fat, ugly, poor, right, that's like a hell to you.

[25 : 56] That's not the Bible's vision. The Bible's vision is that God brings heaven to us because we could never create it here. We're all sinners.

We live in a futile, futile world wrapped with sin. We'll never create heaven here but God will bring it, bring it to his people at the right time.

Let's look at verse 3 to about 5ish. He says, And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them. They will be his peoples and God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more. Mourning and crying and pain will be no more for the first things have passed away.

And he who was seated on the throne said, See, I'm making all things new. That's got to be in your top 10 Bible verses.

[27 : 08] The picture of heaven is one of perfection. Brittany was right. It really is about happiness. Happiness in God.

He'll wipe every tear. Death will be no more. Crying and pain will be no more. But the most important thing, more important than any of those, is that God will be with us.

God will dwell with us. What does he say? The home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them. They will be his peoples and God himself will be with them.

If that doesn't give you chills, then you need to wake up. I'll give you a little history lesson about God's dwelling with people. God created the heavens and the earth.

He created Adam and Eve. He created humanity. And his relationship with them was perfect unity, love. They sinned and everything got ruined.

[28 : 19] And suddenly, there was sin cutting us off from God and him dwelling with us. And then throughout the history of Israel, God initiated a relationship with them whereby he could dwell with them in the tabernacle and in the temple.

You with me? Remember, God dwelt in the Holy of Holies with the Ark of the Covenant. But the problem was he had to be cut off from the people because God can't dwell with sinful people without killing them.

because he's holy and we're sinners and they don't go together. So God dwelt with them. But there was a fracture in the relationship and there was a dividing wall between them.

Jesus comes to earth fully God, fully man, dwelt among people. But he was limited by his humanity because he could only know the people around him.

Jesus dies, goes to heaven, sends the Spirit. Now we, who are believers, have the Spirit dwelling within us, living among us. And that's incredible, but it's not enough.

[29 : 38] It's not enough. If you love God, it's not enough to be separated from him. And in Romans 8, it says, that the creation and the people of God are groaning inwardly.

We're groaning. And the picture is, we're groaning like a woman in childbirth.

Groaning with pains of travail and then looking forward to when the baby will be born and the pain will be gone and this beautiful thing will have emerged.

In a similar way, we're meant to be groaning for the revelation of the sons of God so that we can be with God. Creation's doing it and we're doing it.

And if you're not, you've got to look at yourself. Are you groaning to see God, to be with God? In heaven, God will dwell with his people.

[30 : 55] We will be with him. And that's enough. In addition to that, there will be no more weeping, sickness.

In a room this size, I know for a fact, almost, that some of you have been sexually abused, physically abused, abandoned by parents.

The list could go on. Some of you have had cancer or have cancer. Debilitating injuries and sicknesses. And when God sees those kind of evils happening, he grieves and he weeps.

And that's why when we're united with him in heaven, he will wipe every tear from their eyes. You're going to see him face to face.

I think it's 1 Corinthians 13 says that we will see him face to face. Get a picture of that. Get a taste for that.

[32 : 27] I've got more to say about this, but I'm running out of time. I want you to take note of the throne, underline the throne, unless it's a church Bible. That's really important. We might talk about that next week, I think.

I'll say real quick, he says that he's making all things new. And I don't know about you, I like to think I'm pretty creative and when I hear that, I see Jesus on a throne beaming with a great big smile saying, see, look, behold, look at this, I'm making all things new.

four things, I think, at least, are going to be made new. You're going to have a new spiritual, moral state.

You're not going to sin anymore. You can't. Secondly, you're going to have a new physical body. Talked about that. It's going to be amazing. Three, there's going to be a new creation.

Kind of a global rehab project's going to happen and it's going to be made perfectly new and good. And fourth, you're going to have a new relationship with God. You're going to be with Him. Alright, let's move on.

[33 : 38] Let's go from the rest of verse five to six. He says, also, he said, write this, for these words are trustworthy and true. Then he said to me, it is done.

I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. It is done.

Same, very similar words to what Jesus said on the cross when He died. It is finished. I am the alpha and the omega. I do remember enough Greek to know that that's the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.

What he's saying is, I've been in eternity past, I'll be in eternity future. I am the beginning and the end. I started this thing with creation, I've seen it finished and now it's just the beginning.

The alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. And then he says, this is really important, I'll linger on this a little bit. to the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

[34 : 59] To the thirsty. The question is to you guys, are you thirsty? Actually, that's not the question.

Everyone here is thirsty and everyone out there is thirsty. The question is, are you thirsty for God? Are you thirsty for Him?

I love that word. It's better than hungry. Hungry you can put off. You can do the 40 hour famine, you can block it out. Thirst, you cannot get it out of your mind when you're thirsty. Are you thirsty for God?

Are you groaning until that thirst can be quenched, until it can be slaked? Psalm 42, David says, as the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul thirsts for you.

Where can I go to be with you? Can you hear the intensity in that? The desperation. He wants to be with God, but he can't. Do you ever experience that?

[36 : 07] Why do we walk into this place with our heads down, looking depressed and like we don't want to be here? We should be thirsty to hear from the Word of God.

Thirsty to be with God. I met a girl who was really thirsty for God the other night. I'll tell you a quick story. It wasn't the other night, it was a little while ago, it was another church.

She walked in, she'd been sexually abused, physically abused, abandoned by her parents, thrown out onto the street. Sweet, sweet girl.

She came into church and she was thirsty, man, like, parched. and she didn't know what she was thirsty for, but God showed her.

We sat down with her and we told her about Jesus and she was just like, incredible relief came over her face, like physically relaxed when she heard about Jesus.

[37 : 08] Never heard about him before. And she quenched her thirst in Jesus and it was stunning. And she kept coming to church and learning more and more.

She was reading her Bible like a mad woman, soaking it up. Thirsty for God.

Are you thirsty for God? Jesus says, to the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

So if you're thirsty and you quench your thirst in Jesus instead of stuff in the world, there's plenty of stuff to quench your thirst in the world.

It's just that you're drinking from the toilet instead of from the water of life. That's the truth. Hoping for an amen. Okay. If you're thirsty for God and you persevere onto the shores of heaven, Jesus says, come to me I will quench your thirst.

[38 : 21] Finally and eternally. He says it in verse 7 as well. He says, those who conquer, those who persevere, those who overcome suffering and persecution, those who stay Christian throughout, will inherit these things.

All these wonderful things we've been talking about. And I will be with their God and they will be my children. But as for the cowardly, those who run away from Jesus at the first sight of trouble, those who can't hack a bit of suffering for Jesus' sake, the faithless, people who don't want anything to do with him, reject him offhand, the polluted, the polluted, people who have just been indoctrinated by the world, they're just in love with the world, their religion is the world, the murderers, people who have no regard for people made in the image of God, people who murder people and don't repent.

There will be murderers in heaven. They would have repented and received a new life in Jesus. Those who don't repent. The fornicators, that's just a, you guys need to hear this, this is like a junk drawer for sexual immorality.

God just says, anything that's immoral sexually, fornicators. Again, unrepentant, living for themselves, their own pleasure, outside of God's plan for sex within marriage.

The sorcerers, people who are into magic and black arts and, you know, what's that show? Sensing Murder and Medium and all that stuff.

[40 : 17] It's become so popular now. It's cool to be a witch all of a sudden. When did that happen? It wasn't in the fairy tales that I read. People who dabble with demons instead of trusting in Jesus.

Idolaters, people who put anything above God, worship football, worship shopping, worship Christianity instead of Christ, worship cars, whatever, idolaters, idolaters, and all liars.

People who lie habitually without repenting, without coming to Jesus and finding truth. Their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

I've heard about this for the last four weeks. People who die without Jesus die once, they're resurrected just like us, and then in the second death they are subjected to eternal torment in hell.

There's no water of the river of life in hell. I want to bring us back before I finish to where I started, and that's with Jesus.

[41 : 43] If you don't like the idea of spending eternity in a burning lake of sulfur, and way more than that, if you like the idea of spending an eternity with a God who will treat you as his children, who will wipe away every tear, who will erase the hurt and the pain that is inherent in this futile life, if you love the idea of living in a new creation with a new created body, redeemed, reborn, if you see this picture of heaven and the hairs on the back of your neck stick up and you want to worship God and you want to be with him and inwardly you groan because you've got to go out of here tonight and you're not going to be with him in that way.

If you are counting down the sleeps until you die or until he returns, and I want to point you to Jesus, if you're feeling that way and you don't know Jesus, it's clear Jesus is calling you to himself.

If you know Jesus and you don't feel that way, then pray tonight, pray all night if you have to, that God would give you that passion for eternity, that you would have an eternal perspective on life.

I'm going to be sitting down the back, I want to pray with you after the service, if you're a Christian, I want to pray with you that you would be connected to this vision of heaven. If you're not a Christian, I want to pray with you that you would invite Jesus into your life so that you can live forever with him.

I'll leave it there. I'd love to pray for us right now though, so please bow your heads with me. Lord, your vision of heaven is so incredible.

[43 : 40] eternal, perfect creation is almost too much for us to think about. That we would be able to spend eternity face to face with you and with our loved ones and brothers and sisters is mind boggling.

God, but I pray that we would get it tonight, that you would enable us to get it and to live the rest of our life with eternity in mind, not with the brief heartbeat millisecond life that we have on earth, but to be thinking about an eternity with you.

Lord, make this a community that has an eternal perspective on everything. I pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.