

Good News #2 - 5 Ways the Bible Describes Heaven

- Well howdy, my name is Pastor Mark Driscoll, and I have really, really, really good news for you. In a day, that's filled with bad news, you need some good news. Some good news about what's on the calendar and what awaits you in the future, as right now, you probably have next to nothing on your calendar, and you're wondering what the future holds. God has good news to encourage you. For the Christian, as we live our life, we know that invariably, eventually life comes to an end. And then the question is, what awaits, or I should say who awaits on the other side? This is where the Bible is so meaningful, so hopeful and so helpful. For the Christian, this life is like the move to our eternal home. I'll give you an example. I'm in Scottsdale, Arizona right now at the Trinity Church, and this is the fastest growing city and county in America. People are constantly moving here and we are among their number, my family and I, my wife, Grace, and our five kids. We moved here in 2015. A couple of things we did before the move was, first, we did a lot of research as to our new home. What's it gonna be like when we get there so that we can anticipate, prepare and look forward to it. In addition, we then tried to determine, well, how are we gonna get there, literally, physically make the journey to our new home? And so we loaded up our stuff and we jumped in the truck and we loaded up the dog and we started the drive and we knew where we were going, what we were looking forward to, how to pack and prepare, and the directions to arrive at that preferred destination. For the Christian, you need to know that your life is the journey to your home. This is not your home. This is your residence temporarily, but it's the world that you're passing through on the way to the eternal home that God has for you. So in this series, I wanna unpack heaven and the Kingdom of God and the eternal state, the unseen realm and all that God has awaiting for us on the other side of this life. And so when it comes to talking about heaven and the Kingdom of God and what it is like, there were some followers of Jesus' called disciples. They came to Him and they basically asked Him, so what's it gonna be like when we move to heaven and how do we get there? What are the directions? This conversation is reported in Matthew 18. The disciples came to Jesus saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? How do we get to this eternal home, and how do we prepare ourselves for the best possible situation when we arrive there?" And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of God." Their question was, how do we prepare ourselves to go to this great, grand, glorious, eternal home? And he pulled a kid, sat with Jesus, kinda like Santa at the mall. Here's the kid, probably sittin' on Jesus' lap, blessed and happy. And He says, you know what? You need to be like this kid. This kid's the one to really prepare you for that eternal homecoming. What Jesus is talking about here is that to envision the future, to see the kingdom, to imagine the resurrection, to hope for the eternal life in God's heavenly presence, it requires that we have a child-like faith. Not childish, childish faith is immature. Child-like faith is denoted by two things, trust and imagination. As a dad, I know that raising my kids, one of the things that was astonishing to me is just their innate sense of trust of me. If I told them something, they trusted it and believed it. In addition, raising kids was amazing because they had such an incredible imagination. Kids can dream and envision and they can live in worlds of lots of hypothetical possibilities. When my kids were little, they would dress up.

They would play out storylines. They had great imaginations. And I think what happens is, that as we get older, we tend to be more jaded and less trusting. And we tend to lose our sense of wonder and prophetic imagination. And I think when Jesus says to really understand the kingdom, you've gotta be like a child. That means you gotta trust your heavenly Father. And you've gotta use your imagination regarding your eternal future. And sometimes we don't think of it in this way, because we think that to be child-like, would be to be a bad representation of where we should be as adults. And sometimes we even think that God is old. And many have this picture of God as this old man in the sky. I don't think that's the case. G.K. Chesterton says it this way. He was a British author. He says, "It may be that He, God our Father, has the eternal appetite of infancy, for we have sinned and grown old. And our Father is younger than we." What he's saying is this. Maybe God's not old, maybe he's young. Maybe we're growing old because of sin and death. But because God has no sin and no death, He's eternally young, He's eternally strong. That as we, in our infancy and childhood, have great imagination, and then we get older and we sort of lose our vision and imagination, maybe God is really the young, strong one who envisions a great, grand, glorious future. And for us to really connect with Him, and to look forward to what He has for us, we're gonna need to have trust in our Father and use our imagination and go back to that state of more innocence and hope that we had when we were children. And here's what I want you to know. If you are a Christian, there is a moving day set for you. You are journeying through this life. This is like the drive that we made into Arizona. Your journey through this life is ultimately to get you home. And the Bible talks about this home in five amazing pictures. You're gonna need to use your imagination. We'll look at them in succession. Here's number one of five ways that the Bible describes heaven. Number one, heaven is a kingdom. It's a kingdom. When my boys were little, they would dress up like kings. They would have plastic swords. They would have epic battles and they would set up blanket forts. And all of a sudden, our home was transformed into their kingdom. And sometimes people would come into the house and they'd say, "Why do you let your kids make such a mess?" Because they're practicing for heaven. Jesus is a king, and they're gonna rule and reign with him. And if they wanna make a blanket fort and stand on the coffee table, that's their internship for eternity. They need to keep their imagination. Heaven is a kingdom, it's a kingdom. It says this in 2 Samuel 7:12-13. The context here is something called the Davidic Covenant. David was a king and he established a kingdom, and that it was prophesied and promised rather, that through David, would come King Jesus to establish the eternal Kingdom of God. And so it says, "When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you. And I will establish his kingdom." That's the kingdom of King Jesus. "And I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." The Kingdom of God, we're to use our imagination, is like a kingdom ruled by a perfect king. And He sits on a throne throughout the whole Bible. Jesus is continually shown ruling and reigning from a throne. You need to know that right now, this throne exists, and Jesus is seated upon it in the unseen realm. And one day that throne will come to this earth as the realms reunite, and King Jesus establish his divine rulership over all creation that He has made. And this is this great, glorious, grand picture of Jesus as king, as king. There will be a day that we have no more elections. We have no more politicians. We don't need to have any more votes. There'll only be one person who makes all the decisions. That will be our king from His throne, and we'll all be happy together, forever. Daniel 7, we went through

the book of Daniel recently, spent 12 weeks blew my mind, love that book! Here is one section from Daniel 7. "With the clouds of heaven, there came one like the son of man." This was Jesus' favorite title for Himself. He referred to Himself as the son of man, roughly 80 times. And what He's saying is, the king that was foreshadowed in Daniel has now forthcome in me, that's what he's saying. "And he came to the ancient of days," that is God, the Father, "and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom that all peoples nations and languages," global kingdom, "should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away. His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed. The saints," that's the children of God, "of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever, and ever." This is a kingdom that never ends. And hope of this kingdom in the future, enables us to journey through this life, to that eternal home. That's the whole context of Hebrews 11. It is the chapter on faith, and it lists all of these saints who died in faith, trusting that this life was their journey to their home. And it summarizes their story in Hebrews 11:16 saying, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one, that is a heavenly one. Use your imagination. What will it be like when there are no longer nations, but all nations are united in one kingdom? What will it be like when there are not rulers competing, but one ruler who is serving? What will it be like when there are no wars, because the Prince of Peace has come? What will it be like when we are not fighting for resources, but under the leadership of King Jesus, we are sharing all resources? What will it be like when Jesus brings life to those who've experienced death, healing to those who have experienced sickness? This kingdom is coming right now. This kingdom exists in the unseen realm. And one day it will return to the earth, and it will come on the clouds with our King Jesus. This is the hope of the believer in the midst of the pain of this world. And this is why some people who long for this king and this kingdom, it's why we get sidetracked with all kinds of silly politics. People who think that all nations can reunite or that all peoples can be blessed or that all wars can cease or that all needs can be met. Ultimately what they are longing for, whether they know it or not, is the second coming of Jesus Christ. Until Jesus shows up, there is conflicts between kingdoms. And when the king comes, all the conflicts end, and all the children of God are blessed and united forever and forever and ever. That's exactly what he is saying. Now, let me say this as well. In the Kingdom of God, you will have meaningful, valuable, purposeful work to do. We looked in the previous sermon in this series, that God created work before sin entered the world. He created Adam, our first father, it says in Genesis 2, placed him in the garden to work it and to keep it. What this means is, you and I are given, by God, divine destiny to create. To create culture, to create nations, to create buildings and civilizations, and societies. This is kingdom building. This is nation building. And let me say this, when Jesus returns, this work will not end. It will actually be perfected. You will see buildings built. You will see education flourish. You will see technology expanded. You will see people going on vacations. You will see international exploration. You will see people going out to visit new planets and solar systems and investigating all of the world that God made. That this kingdom is not a boring one, it's an exciting one. It's where heaven and earth come together. The curse is lifted, God's grace is present and human potential made in the image and likeness of God, empowered by the Spirit of God, achieves full potential. This means you'll have exciting things to do, exciting places to explore. And I'm just so looking forward to this, this false narrative and notion that heaven is just gonna be boring, and we'll have nothing to do. It is

demonic, it is a lie promulgated by Satan, who got kicked out of heaven, and ever since has been really frustrated. And as a result, has declared war and a negative PR campaign on what the Kingdom of God is actually like. And I was thinking about it this week. This means that we'll still be learning. Just because things are perfect, doesn't mean that they can't learn and grow. I'll give you an example. Jesus, in Luke 2:52, while on the earth, Jesus was sinless and perfect, but He came in full humanity. And as a result, it says that He grew in wisdom, stature and favor with men and God. You know what that means? Jesus learned, Jesus grew, Jesus explored. What that means is, even you in your perfected, resurrected eternal state, child of God, you're still gonna be learnin' stuff. Because you may be perfect, but you're not all knowing. Only God is all knowing. You'll still be working. Just because you're perfect, doesn't mean you don't have anything to do. It means that there's lots of opportunity. And when the curse is lifted, and your full potential's unleashed, just think of all the things you'll learn, all the places you'll go, all the things you'll do. It's gonna be amazing and exciting. And for those of you who love making culture and you love seeing progress and you love a sense of adventure, the Kingdom of God is exactly what God has intended for you to experience eternally. And again, just because we're perfect, doesn't mean we're not learning. Doesn't mean we're not growing, because there is always something to learn. There is always something to do. There are always ways to grow in the Kingdom of God, as we become more like Him. In addition, number two, heaven is a city. Use your imagination. It's a city. It says in Genesis 12:8, early on with our first parents, Adam and Eve, God blessed them. You need to know that God loves you, and God blesses you. That's where He starts. They hadn't done anything to deserve it, neither do we. God's just a God of grace. God said to them, He speaks to us. "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the heaven and every living thing that moves on the ground." This is the cultural mandate. This is the cultural mandate. At this point, there is no city on the earth. There's a garden. There's a garden in the middle of the earth, and God puts our first parents there and says, okay, have kids who have kids, who have kids who have kids, lots of babies. Fill this whole planet with people. Exercise your dominion over animals and lower creation. And the theologians call this the cultural mandate. What God is talking about here is, build cities, build homes, write music, script plays, open educational institutions, create culture, human life, and flourishing on the earth. That's the innate design plan that God decreed within us from our first days on this planet that we were supposed to take over the planet and we were supposed to develop it. Hebrews 11:10 says that Abraham was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. Abraham is our father in the faith. He's our prototype of what it means to trust God through this life until we get home. And the question is well, what sustained him? Well, what sustained him was this, the hope of a city built, not by human hands, but by God. And that's exactly what sustained him, and that's what should sustain us. As we see economies fall and nations in crisis and lots of problems. And it seems like death is the end, it's not. It's just the relocation date for the children of God, to the City of God, to be blessed together forever. This changes how we grieve, this changes how we mourn, this changes how we suffer. It doesn't mean we deny reality, but we endure reality to get to the greater reality. And that is the Kingdom of God and the City of God that never end. Revelation 21:23-27 shows us this. The storyline of the Bible is beginning, middle, beginning. Genesis is where it begins, in the middle, lots of sin and suffering and death, and the first and the second

coming of Jesus. And then the great end, the second coming of Jesus to establish the Kingdom of God. So Genesis is the book of beginnings, Revelation is the book of conclusions. And God goes back to His original design plan to subdue the earth, to bless humanity and to allow human flourishing by His grace. And here we see the city. This is the City of God. Right now, we all live in cities of man, to quote the Church Father, Augustan, "We live in cities built to the glory of man. And this is the City of God." The city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it. Meaning that Jesus in his resurrected glorified ruling and reigning state, will be unveiled in such fullness of glory that all of creation will not need a sun or a moon to create light. The presence of Jesus will light up the world. When Jesus said, "I am the light of the world," He was not speaking in hyperbole, but He was prophesying eternity. Goes on to say, by its light, the nations will walk. No more wars, no more conflict, no more us versus them. Us with Him, that's what it's all about. For those of you who want unity by the way, here's the secret. For people to be unified, there needs to be a center for them to gather around. When Jesus returns, all the nations will be unified around Him. The point is this, there is no unity until the king returns and becomes the center of all history and all creation. And then as we gather around the king, we are unified with one another as a byproduct. This cannot happen until Jesus comes, and any effort to cause this kind of unity apart from Jesus, opens up the door to the demonic and for Satan and the antichrist, to come in and try and bring some sort of unity apart from Jesus, which is just a counterfeit. The story goes on. The kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. They're not gonna be bragging about their accomplishments or achievements. They'll just come in and thank Jesus for the opportunity and give Him glory. And it's gates will never be shut by day. Tonight, when you go to bed, you're gonna probably do like me and lock the door on your home and then double check the lock and make sure all the doors are locked. You know why? Because there's sin in this world. There's danger in this world. There's evil in this world, not in this city. No sin, no evil, no death, nothing to fear. The gates of the city are wide open. Everybody can come in. The gates of the home are wide open. The gates of the church are wide open. The gates of the businesses. There will be businesses in this city. You entrepreneurs, do not fear. You're gonna have awesome businesses to lead and to run. All of that is God's divine decree and design. But there won't be any looting. There won't be any stealing. There, there won't be any dying. There won't be any attacking. There won't be any warring. All sin is gone and everything's open. You know we live in a world, right now, everything's closed. Everything's closed. In this city, everything's open, everything's open. You can go anywhere at any time, no problem, no restrictions, no quarantine. Don't even need to wash your hands. You can just go. That's this great city. The gates will never be shut by day, and there will not be any night there. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false. But only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, in the Lamb's book of life. In the ancient world, if you were a resident of a city, you would show up at the gate, and you could only enter the city if your name was listed as a resident of the city. So when you die, you will stand before the Lord Jesus, the gates of heaven are open, but you will not be allowed to enter unless your name is on the guest list. That's why the most important decision you make is who your God is, because that determines whether or not you're on the guest list. So let me help you get on the guest list. Jesus Christ is God. Jesus Christ is God who entered into human history to defeat death, to forgive sin and to open up this city and

this kingdom to you. You are welcome to enter in, to be blessed by him, to be with him forever and ever and ever. But you need to belong to Him, you need to follow Him, you need to trust in Him. This Jesus needs to be your king, your Savior, your Lord. Which means right now, as we're talking, you have the most important decision to make. Will I give my sin to Jesus? Will I give myself to Jesus? Will I give my future to Jesus? Will I ask Him to forgive me? And if you would right now, just simply say, Lord Jesus, I am a sinner and part of the problem on the earth. You are a Savior and the only hope for me and the earth. Please forgive me and put my name on the guest list. If you would, right now, just communicate that to the Lord Jesus, either verbally or just out of your heart mentally, He will hear and answer that and good news for you, your name goes on the guest list and when you die and stand before Him, the gates will be open, and you will be welcomed into your eternal home in the City of God, in the Kingdom of God, with Jesus as your king, to live blessed forever. It's amazing, this is why the Bible calls this good news. And let me just say this. All we're getting right now is bad news and nothing to look forward to. Well, the Kingdom of God, that's good news. The City of God, that's something to look forward to. And you know why we love city so much? I sure do. We love sports, we love going out to eat, we love all the activities and events and opportunities and cultural diversity. The City of God is like that. And the cities in the Kingdom of God will be like that. You're gonna go out to dinner. You're gonna go to events. You're gonna hear concerts. You're gonna see people get together for holidays and festivals. It's gonna be amazing. Everything's not gonna be closed like it is now. It goes on to say, nothing unclean will enter. Only those who belong to the Lord Jesus, and He's here referred to as a Lamb, that the first time that He came, He came as a Lamb, humble, meek, to offer His life in our place for our sins. When He comes again, He'll come as lion to rule and to reign over His kingdom forever. Receive Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and then await Jesus who comes as the lion to conquer the nations. That's our Jesus. And I was thinkin' about it, I love cities. For the first time in the world's history, the majority of residents on planet earth are living in cities. People are moving to cities, and people are making cities here in the Valley. They keep making new cities. You know why? Cities are awesome, cities are awesome. It's where there's diversity, it's where there's culture, it's where there's energy and life and activity and innovation. When I was a little boy, I lived next to an airport. And my dad was a union drywaller, His name was Joseph, like Jesus, he was a construction worker. And I would just sit outside and the planes would sort of take off and land right over our home. And I remember I always wondered, I wonder where they're going? I never got to go on a plane 'cause we couldn't afford it. So I got on my bike as a little kid, and I drove to the library, and I would go get magazines. And I would look at pictures and I would try to find the cities of the world. And then I'd try to figure out what cities my airport flew to. And then I would look up the cities, 'cause I wanted to see, well, when they land there, those people on these planes, what's it gonna be like? And then as I got a little bit older, God was really gracious to me, and He's opened a preaching ministry that's gone global. And I was thinking about it. I've been able to take my kids with me all over the world. We got to go to Israel. We got to see Jerusalem. That was awesome. We got to go over and see Bethlehem where Jesus was born. I took my kids to Australia. We spent a month living downtown Sydney on Darling Harbor, beautiful! We packed up all the kids and we went to Scotland. We got to see Glasgow and Edinburgh and the Royal Mile and Mary Queen of Scott's house and John Knox's church.

Amazing, amazing places to visit. I got to take my wife with me and we went to South Africa and we got to see Cape Town. She went home and then I went on to see Johannesburg, a much more dangerous city. And I didn't necessarily want her to be in that town with me. I've been to new Delhi in India. I've been to Singapore. I've been to Port-au-Prince, Haiti after tragedy struck. One of the favorite places that I've ever been is London. One of my most favorite places that we've been as a family was in Istanbul Turkey. We got to see the Hagia Sophia, the Chora Church, the Blue Mosque, the Grand Bazaar, the Spice Market, just mindblowing. I love going to see cities and explore cities. You know why? God made us to live in a city, and God made a city for us to live in. And in addition, in this kingdom, not only is there God's city, God sends us out with a cultural mandate and the fullness of resurrected human potential without the resistance of the curse, to make culture and create cities. I'm just telling you, nobody in heaven's gonna be bored. Everything in heaven's gonna be awesome. That's what I'm telling you. And our vision of heaven tends to be far too spiritual and not enough physical. You are going to have your body and soul reunited, heaven and earth will come together, the Kingdom of God will include the City of God and cities. And we're gonna be having incredible opportunity for all of eternity. And I'm so excited about it. And I want you to be too. I want you to have something to look forward to, and you do, if you belong to the Lord Jesus. Third picture, use your imagination, heaven is a home. Heaven is a home. Right now, most of us are spending our time at home. You're probably hearing this sermon at home. Heaven is also a home. And what I want you to know, is that if the Father has a home for you, the Father wants the culture and the environment of His home to live in your home. A culture of love and peace and joy and friendship and having meals together and making memories together. The Father's culture of His home needs to be the culture that men, as fathers, bring into our home. When it says thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, I think a good place to start would be your house and mine. Jesus says this in John 14:1-3, "Let not your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe also in me, in my Father's house." He's talking about the Kingdom of God. He's talking about heaven. He's talking about the resurrected state. He's talking about eternal life. "Are many rooms," it's a big house. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again to take you to myself, that where I am, you may also be." We've got some folks here at our church in Scottsdale, they know that they're gonna move. And so what happens is, Mom and the kids are home at their old home. Dad comes to the Valley first, to what? To get things set up for the family. Buys a house or rents a house, gets it furnished, gets it set up, figures out all the details and then goes and gets Mom and the kids and says, "Okay, we're gonna leave this home, we're gonna move to that home. But that's okay, I got everything ready for the family." Jesus says that He's gone before us, to prepare a place for us at the Father's house, and that He's coming back to take us from our homes to the Father's house. Imagine what it would be like to have Jesus living at your house. Let me tell you this, He'll live at your house right now. If you will spend time in the scripture, spend time in prayer, spend time in worship, Jesus will move into your house until He comes back to move you to the Father's house. This is amazing. This is about love and family and relationship and more. The greatness of a kingdom, the majesty of a city and the intimacy of a family. Those are the pictures of the Kingdom of God. 2 Corinthians 5:1, the Apostle Paul says this, "For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home," your body, your house, your condo, your apartment, those are tents. It is going to be destroyed. "But we have a building from God, a

house not made with hands eternal in the heaven." You know, we live in a day where you wanna get a good builder to build your home. Imagine how amazing your home will be if God builds it. It's gonna be a perfect home. God's gonna bless you, God has good for you, God is a generous God, God has a residence for you that is actually more amazing than you can even anticipate. This is why we keep working on our homes. That's why we keep moving homes. This is why we paint homes. This is why we clean our homes. This is why we redecorate our homes. Why? Because we were made to live in a home. And ultimately it's the Father's house that we're made for. We get a picture of this in Revelation 21. It combines that first theme of kingdom with this second theme of city, with this third theme of home and family. It brings these first three images together. "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth." Earth is going to be perfected and joined by heaven. Heaven and earth will come together. Earth will be perfected and have added to it, heaven. Somebody asked, "What will that be like?" Amazing, we'll have to see. But it's gonna be incredible. People and angels and other divine beings, living together, all the nations, those who are dead and departed, all resurrected, all the nations, cultures, languages, peoples, foods, all of this together in one perfect place ruled by King Jesus forever. And for us, it is our home. And finally we're no longer restless, we're settled. I have moved my poor wife so many times. Moved her so many times. It's because I'm restless, and no matter where we move or how great the house is, it doesn't quite feel like we're home yet. As I study the Bible, I realize that I'm gonna feel like that until I get to the Father's house. That ultimately, that is to be my eternal home. I saw a new heaven, a new earth, the first heaven, the first earth passed away. God perfects, renews, restores, redeems all things. "And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God." Think of the most amazing city you been to, and then think of the city that God made, and how amazing it will be to walk into that city. "And I heard a loud voice from the throne." I always liked the loud voice parts of the Bible. Those are my, those are my life versus. "Saying behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them and they will be his people, and God, himself will be with them as their God." What he's talking about here is, it's a kingdom with a city called the New Jerusalem. And the whole point is for the Father to be with the family, the Father to be with the family, in a home. When we moved some years ago, when we first landed here in the Valley, we moved here in 2015, Grace and I and the five kids, for a while, we lived in a Vrbo. It was just a rental house and it smelled like Satan's feet. That's what it smelled like. It smelled like Satan's feet. And my kids were hoping that this was not our forever home. It wasn't really well put together. It didn't work very well. And I remember one day we were having a conversation with the kids and they said, "We miss home," because we had moved. We'd gone from one place, but we'd not yet found our next place. We were in the in-between place. So rather than looking forward to the next place, they were looking backward to the previous place, which is understandable. And it's what we all do in this life. I want you to look forward and not just backward. And so, what one of the kids said was, they said, "I miss our home." I said, "I understand that." I said, "Home is two things. It's a people, and it's a place. It's a people, and it's a place." I said, "If our family was in Arizona, but you were back in our old house, would that feel like home?" My child said, "No, it wouldn't be home unless the family was together." The point is, heaven is a place for a people. Heaven is not just a place, it's people, it's relationships, it's love, it's making memories, it's having meals, it's doing life together in the Father's house. That's what God intends. So the person is Jesus,

the people are the children of God and the place is the House of God. This is the analogy. What's the greatest house you've ever seen? What's your favorite house you've ever lived in? When they have open houses, what do you go to view? Now just use your imagination to increase that to perfection. Number four, heaven is a garden. And the reason I'm sharing it with you in this succession, it's a kingdom that has a city with a house that has a garden. See this imagery, how it all comes together. It's almost like God goes from Google Earth, or all of creation, down to your backyard. God planted a garden, Eden, Genesis 2:8, and there He put the man whom He had formed. God put our first parents in a garden. We were made to live in a beautiful, cultivated environment. It's called Eden, paradise. It's a garden. It's a garden. Not only were we made for that, so we're the other divine beings, angels and others. It says in Ezekiel 28:13 of Satan, you were an Eden, the Garden of God. God made a garden called Eden. It was the intermediary place between heaven and earth. It was the connecting point between the unseen and the seen realm. That's why in Genesis 1 and 2, God is there, Adam and Eve are there, the cherubim angel is there, Satan is there. All of these beings that God made, they meet together in Eden. Satan was made to live in a garden, and then he sinned and rebelled and became a demon and could've stayed an angel. We were made to live in a garden, but we sinned and rebelled and declared war and got kicked out. Ever since that time, Satan has been very bitter and angry 'cause he got kicked out of heaven in the unseen realm. And he got kicked out of heaven on the scene realm. And he hates heaven. This is why he tells lies about heaven, and he wants to keep people from going to heaven. Furthermore, it's why we love gardens, because we were made to live in a cultivated environment and we were kicked out of it because of sin. What does this look like? I'm so glad you asked. Parks, gardens, golf courses, family vacations to the lake, to the beach, to the mountains, to the snow. This is why when flowers bloom, we go take pictures so we can remember it every day. This is why when the leaves turn color, we go out to see them, to hear them crunch under our feet. We're made for the beauty of environments. It's why we love sunsets, it's why we love sunrises. It's why people drive incredible distances to get to the Grand Canyon, north of here, to just see something that's beautiful. You and I were made to live in a cultivated, beautiful environment. It's why we love those things so much. For those of you who bring flowers into your home, you long for the garden of Eden. For those of you who do any yard work or gardening, and God bless ya, you're longing for the Garden of Eden. You're missing the place that was your home, that you have been displaced from. Here's what Jesus says, Luke 23:43, as He's hanging on the cross, There's a thief who deserves to die next to Him, but he repents and comes to salvation, and Jesus says, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise." Paradise means garden. It's delight. This guy is a sinner and he's dying, and he's worried just like today. Many people are worried about death. What happens after I die? Jesus says, "You know what? You get to go to paradise." What He's telling him is, Eden was closed, but I'm about to die on the cross in your place for your sins. Eden will be open. It's a realm on the other side of this life, that will ultimately enter into this world. And when you die, I'll take you there to be with me. You get to go to Eden. You get to go to paradise. Same is true for you, friend. If you belong to Jesus and you die, you get to go to paradise. You get to be in the Garden of God, in the City of God, in the House of God, in the Kingdom of God, all of this is just imagery trying to cause us to set our thoughts on things above that are coming down to bless those who are below. Revelation 2:7,

"To the one who conquers, I will grant eat the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." When Jesus comes back, He's bringing the Kingdom of God. He's bringing the City of God. He's bringing the House of God, and He's bringing the garden with Him. It's gonna be unbelievable. And you're gonna get to walk into the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve were and where the cherubim angels were and where God meets with his people. And in addition, the tree of life that Adam and Eve were forbidden to keep eating from, because they would have lived forever apart from God. I don't know what that fruit tastes like, it'll be perfect fruit. You're gonna be able to pick it and eat it and live forever and go see God whenever you want. And go hang out with Jesus whenever you like and go see what an angel's like, whenever you feel like it. You need to know that God has in store for you more than you can hope or imagine, to give you some hope to push through this life, ultimately to the life that never ends. Last few verses on this, Revelation 22. Again, we go from Genesis, the beginning to Revelation, the end, everything that God intended and that sinners and Satan caused to be disrupted, will ultimately be defeated. And Jesus will return to His plan A, for planet earth. "The angel showed me the river of the water of life." Do you like water? Do you like rivers? Do you like lakes? Do you like seas? Do you like waterfalls? It's all in the Kingdom of God. "Bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb. So here's God, the Father here's God, the Son. And this mighty river comes up from under their throne. And it brings life to all, all of the new creation. We're here in the desert, and it's just barren except for the places where there are rivers. And then everything explodes to life in greenery. In this new heaven and new earth, it'll be all of that life, surging forward in the form of water, from the throne of God, the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, to bring life and flourishing to the entire planet. This is gonna be unbelievable! Like there's nothing in National Geographic that's that awesome! There is no Instagram influencer who has snapped a shot of anything that compares to this. That's what I'm telling you. "Flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb in the middle of the street." Back to the, so the garden is in the city. "Also on either side of the river, the tree of life with its 12 kinds of fruits." So you get to join a Fruit of the Month Club when you go to heaven, that's amazing. Same tree, different fruit every month. That's amazing. That's amazing. "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Let me say right now, this may even be medicinal. We're living in a day with pandemics and fears and medicine. Wouldn't it be nice if there was just some natural healing, something that made you healthy forever and safeguarded you against any harm. There it is. There it is. For those of you who are into naturopathy, you ain't see nothin' yet. "No longer will there be anything, accursed," no more curse. "But the throne of God and the Lamb will be in it, and His servants will worship Him." We're gonna throw parties for Jesus. As you look in Revelation, it has lights! Maybe God has lights. It has sounds! Maybe God has amplification. It has instruments! Maybe God's got a guitar. I think that when we see people having fun, we should think, "Ah, those are people who really wanna go to heaven." When we see people at a concert, we should think, "Those are people who really wanna go to heaven." When we see people cheering and shouting and celebrating, we should thank God. Those are people who really wanna go to heaven. This is crazy. You're gonna see His face. The Bible says that we see in part, we know in part, and one day we will see the Lord Jesus, face to face. This is the Bible's language of friendship. On the front of my phone are photos. Our wife's face, a kid's face. I love the face of my wife, I love the face of my kids. You're gonna see the face of Jesus. You're gonna see the face of Jesus.

He's gonna look you in the eye. He's gonna tell you that He loves you. He's gonna tell you that He's glad to see you. He's gonna tell you that the battle is over and the blessing has begun. And you know what's crazy? Because Jesus never dies and the Kingdom of God lasts forever, and the City of God is always open. Anytime you want, you could just go see Jesus. You could look Him in the eye. You could have a conversation with Him. You could ask Him questions. You could do a Bible study with Him. I know I will, I won't be teaching, I'll be taking notes. You're gonna see Jesus face to face, anytime you want. Anytime you want. I'm just telling you. You need to keep the vision of Jesus' face on your horizon and just march through whatever this life requires to get to that moment for that great homecoming. I didn't think about it until I stood right here. One of my favorite things to watch on the internet are the homecoming videos of soldiers, where kids see their dad's face or their mom's face. They've been away for a long time. They really miss them. And I love to see the kids run, looking at the face of their parent. They just can't take their eyes off 'em. And then to see the expression on the face of the child, to see the expression on the face of the parent, and to see the reunion and the homecoming, that's what it's gonna be like. That's what it's gonna be like for the children of God. You're gonna see Jesus. He's gonna look at you, you're gonna look at Him. You're gonna run to Him and He is going to embrace you. Everybody who's ever watched a homecoming soldier video on the internet, ultimately longs for the second coming of Jesus Christ and seeing Him face to face. That's what I'm telling you. Lastly, number five, heaven is a forever party. Do ya like parties? Do ya like parties? Do ya like birthdays? Do ya like weddings? Do ya like Christmas? Do ya like Easter? What do ya like? What do ya like to eat? Who do you like to invite over? What do ya like to do? We all like parties. That's why we're also bummed right now, we can't have any parties, just a pity party. That's all we're allowed to have right now. I'm in Scottsdale. Restaurants are closed, golf is closed, events are closed, spring training is closed, concert venues are closed. Everybody go home, there's no fun. You're not allowed to have any fun. Heaven, everything's open, and it's awesome. And it's free. John 2, Jesus was invited to the wedding with His disciples. And then we see that He turns water into wine. He provides richly for everyone at the wedding party. And it says that this is the first of His signs. He did it Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory. Jesus comes to the earth and you know what He does? He goes to a party. And the first miracle He ever does is changing water into wine at a party. Why? The miracles are signs symbols of the kingdom. When you see Jesus at a party, you're supposed to realize, I guess the Kingdom of God is like a party. And when you see Jesus provide richly for everyone at the party, you are supposed to learn, Jesus has a party plan for me and it's gonna be awesome, and he's very generous, it'll be very lavish. He's gonna provide everything. One of the great lies that Satan tells is that heaven is boring and that hell is fun, because everyone there is throwing a party while everyone in heaven is just sort of sitting around on a cloud, wearing a diaper, plunking a harp forever and ever and ever. That ain't how it's gonna go down. That's false advertising from Satan and demons who don't want you to know how awesome the Kingdom of God is because that would be a party you would definitely wanna get to. Matthew 2, excuse me, chapter 22:1-2. Jesus spoke to them in parables. These are little stories that teach big truths. That's what a parable is. The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a wedding feast, a party. There's a bride, there's a groom. They come together in a covenant of love. Jesus is a groom, the church is His bride. The Kingdom of God is like a wedding. My daughter got

married in January, actually officiated, now I think about it. Officiated the wedding, right about here. Here was my son-in-law, here's my daughter. You know what that was? A picture of the Kingdom of God. Everybody was happy. It was a great celebration. We all had a great time. We all looked forward to it and we all took photos so we could remember it. What an amazing day! At the end, the Kingdom of God is like a wedding party. How many of you gals are looking forward to your wedding? My girls have been practicing for their weddings since they were little. They would get dressed up and pretend that they were getting married. You know why? Because we were made for a wedding. We were made for a feast. We were made for a celebration. We were made for love and union and communion with God. Ultimately, weddings are shadows of the great wedding. Parties are shadows of the great party. Here it is, the last wedding, Revelation 19. They fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" If this sounds boring, you're not getting it. This is more exciting than any tailgate party. This is more exciting than any Superbowl cliffhanger. This is more exciting than any presidential election. People in heaven are not bored. They're throwin' parties and havin' a good time. And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God, all you servants who fear him, great and small." The old people and the young people. Everybody's at this party. Then I heard what seemed to be like the voice of a great multitude. You ever heard a crowd at a sporting event cheer? You ever heard a crowd at a concert singing in unison with the band? That's how the people of God will be in the presence of God when they sing the praises of God. The roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder crying out, "Hallelujah," which means, yes, Lord, amen, get it done, now's a good day! "For the Lord, our God, the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice." It's a party, it's fun, heaven's awesome. "And exalt and give him glory for the marriage of the Lamb has come. His bride has made herself ready." Pray for all our churches to be ready for that day. "It was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure." The fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." Here's what I'm telling you. Everyone who throws a party is lookin' for Jesus. Everyone who cooks a great meal and invites some folks over is lookin' for Jesus. Everybody who goes to a sporting event is lookin' for Jesus. Everybody who goes to a concert is lookin' for Jesus. Everybody who celebrates naughty Mardi Gras, you're lookin' for Jesus. Everybody who drank too much on New Year's Eve and blew a kazoo, you were lookin' for Jesus. Everybody who goes to Vegas is lookin' for Jesus. Everybody who buys a birthday cake is lookin' for Jesus. Everybody who goes to a wedding and cries is lookin' for Jesus. You wanna go to a party. And the party comes to you with the Kingdom of God, with the City of God, with the House of God, with the Garden of God. And in that place is a forever party that never ends. I'm in Scottsdale. Everybody who comes here, this is one of the great winter destinations, is looking for heaven. They go out to eat because they wanna sit down at that great meal that Jesus has set in eternity. They go to the golf course because they wanna be outside in a beautiful place, because that is the place that God has designed them to live in. They go to concerts, they go to events. Why? Because they're all just restless. We've all been kicked out of Eden. We all long for home. We all, we all wish that the world was different and better. And for those of us who know the Lord Jesus Christ, we know that that world is real and it really exists. And one day it will come from the unseen realm to the seen realm, and it will transform everything. We're havin' a conversation about this sermon, and one of the guys asked, he said,

"So heaven'll be like earth, but perfect?" Yes, heaven will be like earth, but perfect, plus heaven. Earth, perfect, plus heaven. Earth perfect, plus heaven. You, perfect, on the perfect earth, plus heaven. That's the party that never ends. "Blessed are they," He says, "who are invited." You are invited. The Lord Jesus welcomes you. You need Jesus. You need to turn to Jesus. You need to trust in Jesus. You need to walk with Jesus. And then ultimately, you will find yourself at that party that never ends. And I can't wait to see you there. It's gonna be awesome, and you don't wanna miss it. And the only way to make it there is to walk with Jesus, because He knows where that party is gonna be. I love ya, I'm praying for ya, and it's fun teaching you. Father God, thank you that we have something to look forward to. Thank you, that we have someone to look forward to. Thank you, that we have somewhere to look forward to. God, as we're getting so much bad news, thank you for the good news of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Lord God, as we feel restless, thank you that there's a home where we will rest. God, we pray that our hearts, our minds, our imaginations would be filled with the kingdom and the city and the home and the garden and the party. In Jesus' name, amen.