

JCI #161 The Glory of Heaven in Six Words June 2015

I've been thinking a lot lately about heaven... probably because I've said goodbye to quite a number of brothers and sisters in Christ in the last couple of months. I also just finished preaching verse by verse through the book of 1st Thessalonians and the subject of heaven's joy, comfort and delight is a major theme therein. Let me share with you six wonderful words from THE WORD that describe this joy, comfort and delight.

THE FIRST TWO WORDS DESCRIBE THE JOY OF HEAVEN - "WITH HIM"

The joy of heaven is that Jesus Christ Himself is there. If Christ weren't there, it wouldn't be heaven! The essence of hell is the absence of Christ's visible presence... "depart from me..." The joy of heaven is being "with Him." Is not this the joy above all joys? To be with Him, face to face, in His presence, forever... this is the joy of heaven. All other joys fade in the light of this glorious joy. If we are with Him, all is well! These two little words encompass an infinitude of joy inexpressible and full of glory.

Rom 6:8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live **with him**:

Col 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear **with him** in glory.

1Th 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring **with him**.

1Th 5:10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together **with him**.

2Ti 2:11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live **with him**:

Re 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign **with him** a thousand years.

Of all the amazing promises of Christ in the scripture, the promise made to the thief on the cross stands out for its simplicity, clarity, certainty, and boundless grace... "This day... with me... in paradise" Luke 23:43

This day... immediate and definite With me... together In paradise... rest, joy, glory

And the two words most precious are the middle two... "with me." Without those two words, the others would be hollow indeed!

THE NEXT TWO WORDS DESCRIBE THE COMFORT OF HEAVEN - "WITH THEM"

The whole point of Paul's explanation to the Thessalonian believers in chapter 4:13-18 is that those who have died believing in Jesus are with Christ now, returning with Him soon, and we will be reunited "with them" forever.

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about **those who are asleep**, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring **with Him those who have fallen asleep** in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up **together with them** in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so **we shall always be with the Lord**. Therefore **comfort** one another with these words.

With them! No more loss, no more separation, no more parting, no more goodbyes, no more sorrow, no more death, no more tears, no more empty chairs, no more empty rooms, no more empty hearts! "With them." This is the comfort of heaven. Our reunion permanent, our fellowship unbroken, our comfort full, our hearts overflowing... all this is found in those two little words... "with them!"

THE LAST TWO WORDS DESCRIBE THE DELIGHT OF HEAVEN - "LIKE HIM"

Being "with Him" is the joy of heaven. Being "with them" is the comfort of heaven. Being "like Him" is the delight of heaven.

1 John 3:1-2 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be **like Him**, because we will see Him just as He is.

“Like Him!” Two little words that speak of the sinless perfection of body, soul and spirit. Never tempted, never failing, never a selfish motive, never an angry thought, never a careless word, never a lust-filled look, never a covetous decision, never a hypocritical smile, never a sickness, never a birthday (it’s one eternal day, remember!! ☺), never a death day, a hospital, a funeral home, never a cemetery, or a prison... We shall be **like Him**, perfect, glorified, forever. Oh the delight of never having a regret, never an “I should have...”, never an “if only...”, never an “Oh well...”, never an “I shouldn’t have...”! As John said, we’ve never seen it! It hasn’t appeared. We’ve never seen glorified saints, but we not only will see them, we will be them!! Oh the delight of bringing worship to our Savior from perfect hearts and bodies among a congregation of glorified worshippers totally undistracted, untempted, and wholly focused on Christ alone who gets all the glory. Satan banished, sin gone, death dead, holiness full, glory unending! Even so come, Lord Jesus!

For the believer, the best is yet to come!

Self Check

- 1) What songs come to mind as you think of the joy, comfort and delight of heaven?
- 2) Are you ready and eager to be with Christ, which Paul says is “far better.”? Why or why not?
- 3) What will be the greatest relief/delight for you as you think about what it will mean to be “like Him?”

For Further Study

Review Revelation 21-22 and make a list of all the things that are mentioned in the new creation - contrast it with the present creation and also with the end of the unbeliever as described in Rev 20:11-15.

“Lord, to be with You is all my desire. To be like you, is all my longing. I desire to be like You, so I may bring glory to You, in a completely pure, full, continuous and unending way. I am so grateful you accept my service and worship now, as impure and half-hearted as it so often is. Forgive me for being so distracted. Capture my heart and mind and soul today. Be glorified in me. Come quickly, Lord Jesus, and finished Your holy purpose in me. I long to see You as You are. In Your holy, saving, glorious name I pray, AMEN.”

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.

Living with leaving in view.... John 9:4

Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable,
changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible
with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows,
spending our time on eternity,
owning nothing yet possessing everything
that matters and lasts.
We are Pilgrims in Paradox.
Welcome to THE JOURNEY