

Main Idea: In John 14:1-7 Jesus gives us three things to think about regarding His Father’s house.

- I. Jesus gives counsel in light of His Father’s house (1).
    - A. Do not be troubled.
    - B. Do choose to trust.
  - II. Jesus gives a description of His Father’s house (2-3).
    - A. Jesus says there are many rooms there.
      1. This speaks of His majesty.
      2. This speaks of His generosity.
    - B. Jesus says He is preparing a place for His disciples there.
      1. The omnipresent God doesn’t need a place to live.
      2. Our Savior knows we do need a place to live, and He’s preparing it for us.
    - C. Jesus says He will come back from there.
    - D. Jesus says He will take us there.
    - E. Jesus says the best part about this place is that He is there.
  - III. Jesus gives directions to His Father’s house (4-7).
    - A. He said His disciples know the way (4-5).
    - B. He said He is the way (6-7).
      1. This is true because He is the truth.
      2. This is true because He is the life.
      3. This is true because He alone can take a person to His Father.
      4. This is true because He alone makes His Father known.
- Implications: Consider some important questions...
1. Is my heart troubled?
  2. Do I know where I am going?
  3. What do I think about when I have nothing else to think about?
  4. Am I ready to go?
  5. Am I helping others get ready?

In another hour or so we’re going to be dedicating a special place to the Lord and for His saving purposes. We’re calling it the Wheelersburg Baptist Church Community Center. Why such a place? This place and the ministries that will happen there exist to show this community that we care for it, and the reason we care is because of the good news concerning the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ cared for us, died in our place, rescued us from eternal hell, and is now preparing another place, an eternal place for us.

So we might say that the purpose for *this place* is our firm belief in *another place*. We care for our community because we want our community to know the One who is the reason we care. So it’s fitting that while we’re dedicating one special place, we’re going to open our Bibles to the passage in which Jesus tells us about the ultimate special place.

*In My Father’s house.*

If you’ve been a believer very long, those are familiar words to you, and this is a familiar text to you. *In My Father’s house are many rooms. I go to prepare a place for you.*

Yet while it’s a familiar text, it raises so many questions. Let’s start with this one. Why would Jesus say that God His Father has a house? A Being who is spirit (John 4:24) doesn’t need a house, right? In Acts 7:48-50 Stephen said, “The Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says: ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things?’”

But now in John 14 Jesus says, “In my Father’s house are many rooms.” Why did Jesus say that?

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\*\*\* Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

And secondly, why did He say it when He said it? He's in the upper room. He's just washed His disciples' feet, just announced that He's about to leave them, being betrayed by one of them and denied by Peter, and He just gave them a new command to love one another in the same way He has loved them. That's when He said it. Why then?

Let's not spiritualize this language too quickly. We hear "Father's house" and we immediately think of *heaven*, right? But this is the only time Jesus used this language to speak of heaven.

Think of it this way. When the disciples heard Jesus say "Father's house," what came to their mind? Perhaps they recalled the account of when Jesus was twelve years old, when He said to Joseph and Mary in Luke 2:49, "'Why were you searching for me?' he asked. 'Didn't you know I had to be in *my Father's house*?'"

No doubt the disciples thought of something Jesus said at the start of His public ministry. Three years earlier, according to John 2:16, He walked into the temple, flipped over the money-changers tables, and shouted, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn *my Father's house* into a market!"

And just three days or so before our upper room text, on Monday of Passion week Jesus again walked into the temple courts, flipped over the tables of the money-changers and said, "'It is written, '*My house* will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers (Matt 21:13; also in Mark 11:17 and Luke 19:46).'"

So up to this point every time Jesus has referred to *His house* or *His Father's house*, He's had the temple in mind. And now, the night before His crucifixion He says to His disciples, "In *My Father's house* are many rooms. I am going there to prepare a place for you." He's talking about heaven, isn't He? He's not talking about the temple this time, is He?

Or is He? For that matter, is this temple that King Herod built the real temple? Does God really live here? Do you recall what Jesus said right after He turned the tables in the temple? Hear Him in John 2:19, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

What temple did Jesus have in mind when He said that? The Jews thought He was talking about Herod's temple. "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple," said the Jews in John 2:20, "and you are going to raise it in three days?"

So in John 2, Jesus said *temple* and the Jews thought He meant a building. What did He mean? Thankfully, we know, for in the very next verse the apostle John says, "But the temple He had spoken of was His body (21)."

So we know what Jesus meant in John 2. First He said, "How dare you turn my *Father's House* into a market," and by *Father's House* He meant the temple. Then He said "Destroy this *temple*," but He clearly meant His *body*.

So what is this *house* He's talking about in John 14? *In My Father's house*. What's He talking about? John doesn't insert an explanation this time, but what Jesus says makes it clear, and what He says is life-transforming.

In fact, my friend, if you're a Christ-follower, this is *your* Father's house. If not, it's not your Father's house, but could be, and you need it to be. And we're going to find out how. In John 14:1-7 Jesus gives us three things to think about regarding His Father's house: counsel in light of it, a description of it, and directions to it.

### I. Jesus gives counsel in light of His Father's house (1).

Please notice that Jesus mentions His Father's house *in verse 2*. So that's in His mind as He speaks these familiar words *in verse 1*. "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me."

So in verse 1 Jesus is giving His disciples some very practical counsel, and the counsel comes in light of the announcement He's about to make regarding His Father's house in verse 2. We'll look at the counsel in a moment, but first *why*. Why did He give this counsel? And the answer is this is what His followers have, a troubled heart (it's singular, a troubled collective heart).

And why is their heart troubled? It's because of three disheartening bits of information that Jesus had just revealed to these men. First, one of them is going to betray Him (13:21). Second, Peter is going to deny Him three times (13:38). And third, worst of all, He is going to leave them (13:33).

Yet Jesus is so generous. If anybody in the room has reason to have a troubled heart, He does, with the hell He's facing. But He knows what His men are feeling, and what they need, so He gives it to them, two assignments, the first negative, the second positive.

**A. Do not be troubled.** "Let not your heart be troubled," says the familiar AV. Literally, it's a present imperative, "Stop being troubled." The Greek verb, *tarasso*, means "to stir up, to cause acute emotional distress or turbulence."<sup>1</sup>

That's interesting. You can't command your emotions, can you? They just happen, right? Jesus did. Jesus told these men to get their hearts in check.

You say, "You mean when I've just heard terrible news, like these men did, I don't have to fall apart? That's not inevitable?" No, not if you know the person these men knew. And not if you do what Jesus calls these men to do.

First, the negative assignment. *Do not be troubled*. Then the positive.

**B. Do choose to trust.** Jesus actually uses two clauses that could be translated a variety of ways, since there's no punctuation in the original text. The KJV uses the indicative, "Ye believe in God," followed by the imperative, "Believe also in Me." But both clauses could be imperatives, "Believe in God. Believe also in Me," as in the ESV and NASB, or the NIV's "Trust in God, trust also in Me."

Regardless, the sense is the same. Jesus is talking to eleven men who do trust in God, but they're in need of a reminder. And they also need to do the same thing with Him, *trust* Him.

Let's not forget what's at stake for these men. Three years ago, these men followed Jesus and burned their bridges, so to speak. Matthew left his lucrative job as a tax collector. There's no going back for him. The others left their fishing nets, and family approval, all for Jesus. And now He says He's leaving? And they can't follow Him?

Dashed hopes are a sure recipe for a troubled heart! But *no*, says Jesus. Do not be troubled. Do choose to trust in God and in Me. I know what I'm doing, even if you don't.

And what subject will help them (and us) replace the troubled heart with trust? This one. Let's talk about *My Father's house*.

Several years ago Joni Erickson Tada wrote an article entitled "What's So Great about the Pearly Gates?"<sup>2</sup> Listen to what she said:

God permitted me to travel down a path that led to a broken neck. The suffering I experienced blew out all the lamps in my life that lit up the here and now, and it made Heaven my focus. Now, 26 years later, I'm still inspired by my blind friends who say, 'When I'm finally able to see, the first face I look at will be Jesus.' And deaf friends who smile and hand sign, 'I've never heard the Hallelujah Chorus, but I can't wait to hear the angels sing it.' Their words of faith give substance to things unseen.

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<sup>1</sup> Louw-Nida

<sup>2</sup> *Discipleship Journal*, Nov/Dec 93, pp 20ff

It's a fact. Broken necks, broken homes, and broken hearts crush our hopes that earthly things can satisfy. Only then does the promise of Heaven move our eyes from this world as we realize, once for all, that earth can never meet our deepest longings.

That's Jesus' point too, isn't it? First, He gives counsel—don't be troubled, rather trust Me, counsel that comes in the shadow of something He's about to tell them. Regarding what subject? Point two...

## II. Jesus gives a description of His Father's house (2-3).

"In my Father's house," continues Jesus in verses 2-3, "are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

There's so much here, and to see it we need to slow way down and ponder Jesus' words phrase by phrase.

First, *in My Father's house*. That raises an immediate question for us, namely, *where is God?* The psalmist asks, and then answers in Psalm 139:7-10, "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast."

So God isn't limited to one space, as we are. He is not a finite creature. He is the infinite, omnipresent Creator.

Yet He does have a home. Where is it? When we open our Bibles we see God in the garden walking with Adam. But then Adam sinned, and God is no longer at home in His world.

Where does He go? In the rest of the Old Testament *heaven* is the place where the omnipresent God dwells. It may not make sense to our finite minds that a Being who is simultaneously everywhere is in a *place*, but this is the language of the Bible. For instance, Psalm 33:13-14 says, "From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth." And consider Isaiah 63:15, "Look down from heaven and see from your lofty throne, holy and glorious."

Then we come to the New Testament where God makes His dwelling among men in the person of Jesus the Messiah. For 33 years God's Son makes His home in the country of Israel, and now He says He's leaving and returning to His Father.

Where is that? *It's not as far away as you might think*, He in essence says to His disciples. Which brings us to the first of five things Jesus said about His Father's house.

**A. Jesus says there are many rooms there.** "In my Father's house are many rooms."

What is a house? A house is where a person lives, a dwelling. What's the Father's house? It's where God lives. And where is that? It's the whole universe.<sup>3</sup> God isn't just in heaven. In fact, there's not a place in heaven or on earth where He isn't. He is everywhere.

So why did Jesus just say that in His Father's house there are many rooms? Think back to His immediate conversation with Peter. Jesus told Peter, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now." Peter responded, "Why can't I follow now?" It was unbearable to Peter that Jesus was going somewhere without him.

To which Jesus replied, and I'm indebted to G. Campbell Morgan for this thought, "Hold on, Peter. In My Father's house (which is the whole universe, for that's where My

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<sup>3</sup> Observation by G. Campbell Morgan, p. 244.

Father lives), there are many rooms. So while I am leaving you, I'll still be in My Father's House, just in a different room from you. Don't be troubled. Trust Me."

I remember saying something similar to my daughters, after they had a bad dream at night. "I'm afraid, daddy! Please don't leave me!" "It's okay, honey. You'll be okay. I'll just be in the next room. Trust me."

So what is Jesus indicating about His Father's house when He says it has many rooms? I see a couple of things.

1. *This speaks of His majesty.*

I remember seeing the former palace of Nicolae Ceaușescu, the Romanian dictator. It has 1,100 rooms and is twelve stories tall, and covers 3.7 million square feet. Why in the world would any person need a house with 1,100 rooms? He was making a statement, wasn't He? About his supposed majesty as a ruler.

For Ceaușescu, it was a pompous sham. But for God, it's reality. The reason His house has many rooms is because of His *majesty*. There is none more majestic.

2. *This speaks of His generosity. Many rooms.* That means there's plenty of space for everyone living there. No skimping here. No crowding. The Father's House is a roomy place! It will be full of marvelous dwelling places.

But we need to set the record straight. First, what about the notion of having a *mansion* in heaven? That came from songs, not Jesus. And the songs got it from a poor translation in the AV back in the 1600s.

"In my Father's house are many *mona*." That's the Greek word, and it comes from the Greek verb *meno*, which means "to abide." So the word just means "abiding places." The Vulgate (Latin Bible) used the word "mansiones." That's where the KJV picked up the word *mansions*.

So I hate to ruin a good song for you, but if you think heaven will be a place where you'll have your own private, 25-acre secluded, fenced-in mansion, you'd better rethink. Now don't take me wrong. Heaven will be wonderful, but for a far more significant reason than having my own mansion with valet parking. We'll see that reason in a moment.

Listen to commentator, William Hendriksen, "The Father's house...is like a beautiful apartment building, with ever so many completely furnished and spacious apartments or dwelling-places, and no crowding of any kind! Inside the one house are many mansions."<sup>4</sup>

And for sure, let's get rid of the idea of heaven we see on the cartoons. We certainly won't be disembodied spirits floating around on clouds. Yes, when a believer dies now, his spirit goes to be with the Lord (2 Cor 5:8). But one day, the Lord will raise our bodies from the dead and give us glorified bodies, and a place for those bodies to live, and work, and play, and enjoy relationships, with Him and each other!

Friends, what's coming is a place more real than 1241 Crescent Drive. What else is true of the Father's House?

**B. Jesus says He is preparing a place for His disciples there.** "If it were not so, I would have told you." If *what* were not so? If His Father's House didn't have many rooms.

To be honest, I'm not sure why Jesus said that. Why would it add further burden to the disciples if His Father's house didn't have many rooms?

If G. Campbell Morgan is right, and the Father's House refers to the whole created universe, then Jesus is saying, "Look, Peter, don't be upset because I said I'm leaving. I'm just going to another room. My Father's House has many rooms, and if that weren't

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<sup>4</sup> Hendriksen, p. 265.

so, I would have told you. In fact, the reason I'm leaving this room, and going to *another* room, is to prepare things for you, so you can live with My Father forever."

Perhaps we could say it this way.

1. *The omnipresent God doesn't need a place to live. However...*

2. *Our Savior knows we do need a place to live, and He's preparing it for us.*

That raises another question. Since John 1:3 teaches that Christ created the universe, and Genesis says He did it in six days by merely speaking, why has it taken Him so long, two thousand years to date, to prepare this special place?

Notice His words carefully. He says in verse 2 "I am going *there* to prepare a *place* for you." I find D. A. Carson's insight helpful, "The words presuppose that the 'place' exists before Jesus gets there. It is not that he arrives on the scene and then begins to prepare the place; rather, in the context of Johannine theology, it is the going itself, via the cross and resurrection, that prepares the place for Jesus' disciples."<sup>5</sup>

I think that's it. When Jesus says, "I go to prepare a place for you," He has in mind the work He's about to do. He's going to the cross. He's going to a tomb. He's going to come out of that tomb. He's eventually going to go back to heaven and send His Spirit on the day of Pentecost. He's going to work through His Spirit to rescue a people to live with Him in a very special place. So it's by means of all aspects of His *going* that He will *prepare a place for you*.

Friends, without Jesus' death, there is no place for sinners in the presence of God. Without Jesus' resurrection, and His ascension, and His sending the Spirit, there are no resurrected, ascended, and Spirit-indwelt children of God prepared for this place.

You see, Jesus does all the preparation. He came to prepare a people. He's going to prepare a place for those people.

No wonder we sing, *Our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness!*

So what's true of the Father's House? One, many rooms there. Two, He's preparing a place for His disciples there. Three...

**C. Jesus says He will come back from there.** That takes us to verse 3, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

The first action is finished. *If I go*. He did go. The second action is in process. *And prepare a place for you*. That's what He's doing now, preparing the place and a people for that place in His Father's House. But the third action is yet future. *I will come back*.

MacArthur suggests that Jesus is here referring to the rapture of His church, and I would agree. Jesus makes no mention of the judgment that will be associated with His second coming to earth, but simply says "I will come back and take you to be with me."

We read about this event in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be *caught up together* with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be *with the Lord forever*."

That brings us to the fourth reality regarding the Father's house.

**D. Jesus says He will take us there.** Notice the conclusion of verse 3, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back *and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am*."

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<sup>5</sup> Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 489). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

This *taking you to be with Me*, this *catching up* of believers into heaven, to use the language of 1 Thessalonians 4, is the rapture of the church, an event that I believe will be followed by the Lord's judgment of the world in the tribulation period described in Revelation 6-18. That event will conclude with Christ's second coming to earth, described in Revelation 19, in which He is accompanied by His bride the church (Rev 19:7-8, 14).

You say, "That makes it sound like we're not going to be in heaven forever." Technically, you're right. "Heaven" is an intermediate place. It's where the believer goes when He dies, or is raptured, but it's not the believer's final abode.

The same apostle who recorded John 14 also recorded this in Revelation 21:1, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away." Verses 10-11, "And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God..."

The angel actually measured that city for John, who recorded the dimensions: 12,000 stadia in length, width, and height, a 1400 mile, three dimensional cube (Rev 21:16).

So the Father is going to do what we often do. One day He's going to move His family, from a home that's been stained by Lucifer's defiance (heaven) and Adam's rebellion (earth), to a new home.

"We are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth," writes Peter in 2 Peter 3:13, "the home of righteousness."

And that, dear brothers and sisters, is where we're going to live forever and ever! Which brings us to the fifth thing Jesus has to say about His Father's house, and it sort of catches you off guard.

Look at verse 3 again. Jesus doesn't say what we would expect Him to say, what so many of our songs about the life to come suggest He said. Namely, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you *to that wonderful, gold-paved place*." No. Rather, He says, "I will take you *to be with me*," and then emphasizes, "that you also may *be where I am*."

My dear friend...

**E. Jesus says the best part about this place is that He is there.** It's not the streets of gold, or the angel choirs, or even our loved ones who've gone before us. I'll say it again. The *best* part about this special place is that *He* is there.

In fact, to borrow a thought from Piper, if heaven would be heaven to someone *without Jesus*, then that person has every reason to question whether they'll even be there. What makes heaven heaven IS Jesus.

"So wonderful is Christ's love for his own," says Hendriksen, "that he is not satisfied with the idea of merely bringing them to *heaven*. He must needs take them into his own embrace."<sup>6</sup>

And that brings us to Jesus' third point regarding His Father's House. First, some counsel in light of it—don't be troubled, rather trust. Second, the description of it. And third, directions to it.

### III. Jesus gives directions to His Father's house (4-7).

He did so in two ways. First...

**A. He said His disciples know the way (4-5).** Notice verse 4, "You know the way to the place where I am going." That's intriguing. Jesus told His disciples they already

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<sup>6</sup> William Hendriksen, pp. 265-6.

knew the way, and they knew it because He'd been telling them for three years. They heard Him say things like:

John 3:3 "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world...believe...have everlasting life."

John 4:14 "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give shall never thirst, but the water I shall give shall be a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

John 5:24 "Verily...he that hears...has everlasting life..."

John 10:27-28 "My sheep hear my voice...and I give them eternal life..."

So they knew the way. They'd heard all this before. But just like us so many times, they didn't get it.

In fact, one of them spoke up and said so in verse 5, "Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'"

Jesus' response?

**B. He said He is the way (6-7).** "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.'"

This is Jesus' sixth I AM claim, and since the verbs in verse 7 are plural, we know that Jesus isn't just talking to Thomas, but the rest of His disciples too.

*I am the way.* To go to the place I'm preparing in My Father's house, you must go through Me. *I am the way.* Not *a* way, but *the* way. Not just one road to heaven, contrary to popular thinking, but the only road.

So if a person doesn't put their faith in Jesus, that person isn't going to the Father's house. Jesus is *the way*. But how can we be sure He's the way? After all, there are many religions in the world. What makes this claim from Jesus' lips true? He tells us right here, four reasons.

1. *This is true because He is the truth.* "I am... the truth." Jesus doesn't merely claim to speak truth. He claims to *be* the truth. He *is* the truth. He personifies it.

2. *This is true because He is the life.* "I am... *the life.*" Again, He doesn't merely say He *gives* life, as amazing as that would be. Rather, He *is* the life. Not just an approach to life, but *the* life. He is the Creator of life, the sustainer of life, the One who models true life, and who gives life, for in giving life He is giving Himself.

3. *This is true because He alone can take a person to His Father.* Hear His words, "No one comes to the Father except through Me." Do you want to go to the Father's House? Then you must come through Jesus, for He's the only One who can take you there. And that, of course, is why He came to earth, to rescue sinners who left to themselves would never make it to the Father's house, but would perish in their sins. But He came so that through the merit of His perfect life, and the cleansing power for sin in His death, and the delivering power of His resurrection, He can take a sinner who believes in Him where no religious system, or no amount of good deeds, could ever take that sinner. *To His Father's House.*

4. *This is true because He alone makes His Father known.* "If you really knew me," He says in verse 7, "you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." As MacArthur puts it, Jesus "is not merely a manifestation of God; He is God manifested."<sup>7</sup>

So there are the directions. Very simple, so simple a child can follow them. If you want to go to My Father's house, says Jesus, you must know Me, believe in Me, put your total trust *in Me*.

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<sup>7</sup> MacArthur, p. 104.

Implications: Consider some important questions...five personal questions.

1. *Is my heart troubled?* “Let not your heart be troubled.” That’s what Jesus said. Is yours? If so, I have good news for you. He cares about your troubled heart and has provided a remedy for it. *Trust Me.*

2. *Do I know where I am going?* Bishop Ryle once said, “Heaven is a holy place. Its inhabitants are holy. Its occupations are holy. To be happy in Heaven, it stands to reason we must be prepared for it.”<sup>8</sup>

Dear friends, unprepared people cannot and will not go to heaven. This is why Jesus came to earth, to prepare a people for heaven. And this is why He left via His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, to prepare a place for His people.

Do you know where you are going? The Bible says the believer in Christ *knows*. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:1, “Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.”

3. *What do I think about when I have nothing else to think about?* I heard Pastor Sinclair Ferguson ask that question in an online sermon this week, and it’s a good one. When you don’t have work obligations, or family responsibilities, or anything else that would engage your mind, what do you think about? Do you think about Jesus and the place He’s preparing?

Why do we talk so little about heaven? In the book, *Facing Death and the Life After*, Philip Yancey remarks, “Although 71% of us believe in an afterlife (says George Gallup), no one much talks about it. Christians believe we will spend eternity in a splendid place called heaven...isn't it a little bizarre that we simply ignore heaven, acting as if it doesn't matter?”

Yancey continues, “I have watched in hospital groups as dying patients worked desperately toward a calm stage of acceptance. Strangely, no one ever talked about heaven in those groups; it seemed embarrassing, somehow cowardly.”

What's so strange about talking about our eternal home and the One who’s taking us there?

4. *Am I ready to go?* You say, “Can a person really be ready?” Paul said he was. “For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain...I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far (Phil 1:21, 23).” Can you say that?<sup>9</sup> Here’s a key evidence...

5. *Am I helping others get ready?* “It is more necessary for you that I remain in the body (says Paul in Phil 1:24).” That’s what life here is all about, knowing Christ and helping others know Him.

Which is what the special place across the street is all about. We’re dedicating that place because we indeed believe in another place, and we want to do all we can to help people know about it and get ready for it!

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<sup>8</sup> *Discipleship Journal*, Nov/Dec 93, 25.

<sup>9</sup> Abraham could. Hebrews 11:10, 14-16 says, “For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God... People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.”