

**God's Heart for You #12**  
**Buried in His Heart Forevermore**  
~ Ephesians 2:1-7

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What do you think life will be like after Jesus returns and we are with Him forever? Or what do you think life is like in heaven now for those who have gone there? I remember thinking about this as a kid when one of my grandparents passed away. I was about 9 years old. I kept hearing that Grandpa was now with the Lord in heaven and life was so much better for him. The only idea I had of heaven came from a picture Bible we had. It portrayed heaven as a city in the distance with golden rays shining out from it. You could see God on a throne above the city or in the city. There was lots of light and clouds.

Now those images may appeal to older people. But to a 9 year old boy, heaven was not very attractive. I think I talked to my Mom about it. I asked her, "Do you think there will be swimming in heaven?" That was one of my favorite things to do as a kid. She reassured me that you could probably do some swimming at some point. So that was good enough for me at the time. As long as there was swimming in heaven, I was ok with going there. I thought we'd have to do the church thing maybe in the mornings. But I could put up with that if we could swimming in the afternoon. That was heaven through a 9 year old's eyes.

So what do you think heaven is like now? What do you think it will be like after Christ returns and we live on the new heaven and earth? I think most of us have an initial positive view of this future life. We may think it's going to be like going on an all-inclusive vacation. We will get there and enjoy freedom from our ordinary troubles. We will get rested and refreshed. We will see people and have fun with them. But what happens when we get all rested up?

Then what will we do? Remember the discussion we had last fall on preparing to finish well? The world tells us that retirement is all about 25 years of leisure and pleasure – except that usually kills people or drives them to despair. So will heaven be like that? We sit around and not do much and eventually get bored?

Then there's another problem with thinking about heaven. Eventually we have to come back to reality. We have to face our lives now. We still have to pay bills; do our jobs; deal with that relationship; parent

our kids; face that illness; try to keep going while we search for purpose. So it's almost like we take a mental holiday but then we get back to the grind. So was it really worth it to think about heaven?

But what if we could think about life with Christ in the coming ages and it could make a huge difference in our lives today? What if thinking about the next life can bring us joy, hope and strength for today? What if pondering our future with Christ gives power and purpose for our lives today?

Well that's what we're going to do today in the final message in the series "Jesus Heart for us." Hopefully, through this series we have a great understanding of Jesus heart. But I pray you did not only learn some information. I hope you will use this knowledge to draw near to Jesus and go much deeper in your relationship with Him. We saw that Jesus is gentle and lowly in heart where we will find rest for our souls. He has a heart filled with compassion for the harassed and helpless. He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses. He deals gently with the ignorant and wayward. He perseveres in love for whoever comes to him. He befriends the worst of sinners. He does not afflict from His heart. His ways are not our ways neither his thoughts our thoughts. He is rich in mercy. He loved us and gave Himself for us. Last week we saw that Jesus loved us to the furthest extremity of love while on earth.

Today, we look at God's continuing love for us through the coming ages. We aim to do this in 3 sections. First, what will God's love towards us look like in the coming ages? Second, we'll look at some questions we might have about that love. Finally, we will look at one way we can apply this to our lives today.

- Will it really be good?
- Won't it be boring?
- Why not so there now?

We go back to a text we did a couple of weeks ago. Ephesians 2:1-7 – the rich in mercy text. But this time, we will put all our focus on verse 7. Ephesians 2:1-7 – Page 829 in the Bibles before you.

### **Ephesians 2:1-7 - ESV**

**2 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work**

in the sons of disobedience—<sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body<sup>[a]</sup> and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>4</sup> But<sup>[c]</sup> God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—<sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,<sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Last time in this passage, we looked at life as a spiritual zombie or walking dead person. We were dead in our trespasses and sins. We walked following the course of the world, following the devil and lived according to the passions of our flesh. Then we saw in verse 4 the tremendous turn with the phrase “But God.” But God being rich in mercy, with great love for us did all those actions in verses 5-6. He made us alive together in Christ. He saved us by grace. He raised us up with Christ. He seated us with Christ in the heavenly places.

Why did God do all this? That’s what verse 7 answers. It gives us the purpose of God’s actions with the phrase “so that.” In some ways, we find an answer to the question “Why did God save you” in verse 7.

Here we discover what God’s love will look like in the coming ages for us. **What will God’s love look like in the coming ages?** It’s worth looking at each phrase because we can miss the depth of what’s revealed here. Every phrase gives us another piece of life and God’s love.

So why are we saved, redeemed, raised up and made alive. In order that “**in the coming ages**” which means forever. It is not just for an age but for the coming ages. This can help us when we struggle with purpose in life or with what God is doing. If we look only to this life to discover God’s purposes, we will miss a lot. We will not know what God is up to. But in the coming ages, He will reveal His purposes. He will need the coming ages because His riches are immeasurable. We finite creatures can’t take in immeasurable riches in 30 minutes. We need eternity for God to reveal His immeasurable purposes and riches. Something that is immeasurable will need a lot of time to measure out.

Then the next phrase reveals God’s activity in the coming ages. “So that in the coming ages **he might show**. God has something to show or display. Imagine that you will get shown a place that you

always dreamed about seeing – The Grand Canyon, The Eiffel Tower, the Ocean or the Pyramids of Egypt. You don't have a problem getting up in the morning on the day you're actually going to be shown it. God will have something new to show us every day in eternity – the immeasurable riches of His grace. They will never run out. We need the coming ages to see them all. It's like going to a museum with millions of pieces to display. Of course, you see maybe less than 10% of the museum collection on a visit. But imagine you have all the time in the world to see and ponder every piece of every collection. That's a little like eterning with Lord.

These riches are not jewels but immeasurable riches of His grace. There's two sides to this. One is that we won't endure a daily scolding about how we don't deserve to be there. God is not going to remind us of our sins or say "Enjoy this, but remember you don't deserve it." No He is gracious and displays His grace. Yet the other side is we will never get complacent about this grace. We will not in 2 million years say, get to the point where we forget why we have the privilege of living in this paradise with the Lord. We won't say to one another "we've earned this. We've done well. We will always be dependent on grace and glad to have it.

I imagine there might times where we sit with Jesus. Maybe He reviews some of our life with us. "You see here, I showed you grace. You see that time you were driving in traffic. I turned the light red to prevent you from getting in that accident. I ensured that you found this resource that would help you answer that question. I brought that person into your life to give you information you needed. I arranged the details necessary for you to meet your spouse. I protected your child when they were out that one night. I ensured those germs didn't take hold of you. I made clear the Gospel to you in that moment." We have an eternity to discover the immeasurable God has graced us.

The immeasurable riches of His grace will be displayed in kindness. It will be beneficial. It will be good for us. It will never taste bad. The days of pain and testing and trials are over. It will be gentle, sweet, pleasant and good.

Yet this is not just some general blessing. It's not like the Lord will go through the new earth with a bag of His immeasurable riches and just throw pieces out to the crowd. Then we just get to enjoy the

candy that fell near our feet. It is towards us. It will be personal. It is like a Father picking us up and sitting us in His lap and giving us His kindness.

That kindness, grace and riches all come because we are in Christ Jesus. We receive it all because we are one with Him. Remember God raised us up with Christ. He seated us with Christ. He will show us the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. We will not fail to see that this is because of Christ. He will get the glory. We get to enjoy all He has done for us.

Dane Ortlund says In Gentle and Lowly, that coming into God's presence on new Earth will be like walking through the wardrobe into Narnia. We will find a world with breathtaking beauty, fellowship with people, freedom from sorrow, pain and suffering and see a clear vision of Christ. Ortlund also says, "For those not in Christ, this life is the best it will ever get. For those in Christ, this life is the worst it will ever get." That's what God's love will look like in the coming ages.

But we still might have questions. **Will it really be that good?** Is it real and true? Will the reality outstrip the brochure about heaven and life with God? I think this question may come to us because of our multiple experiences of disappointed expectations. Someone promises us the greatest experience, or the most exhilarating time or the most memorable week of our lives. But reality doesn't come close to the brochure's promise. It's way more expensive. It's not as pretty as we thought. We got sick on the trip or couldn't see very well.

But when it comes to God, He's not in the business of over-selling himself. There's nothing deceptive about Him. The glimpses of heaven and Himself that He gives to various people throughout the Bible results in them struggling to describe what they saw.

God is unlike humans when it comes to keeping His Word. God has demonstrated His sacrificial love to us through the cross. God is the originator of beauty and the ultimate creator. Life with Him in renewed creation and beautiful city will be worth far more than we can imagine. Yes, it will be really good.

Then there's my question from when I was a kid. **Won't it be boring?** I think this question can reveal a couple of things about us. One is that we haven't thought much about heaven or eternal life with God. We haven't let the Bible shape our imagination and thinking. Most of us probably never even thought

about the coming ages this past week. So we can't comprehend it, we conclude it's some vague afterlife that is supposedly better. So the boring question might come from lack of understanding about the next life.

Or we might live a very blessed lives right now and don't recognize it. We expect it. If we think that life with God might be not be as good as we have it now, we tend to recognize we live a very blessed life. There are millions and millions of people in this world who would love a release from this life to go to eternity with God. They are barely making it. Think about the millions of refugees in Ukraine because of the war. Their lives have been turned upside down. Many families have been split apart with Mom's and kids separated from Dads who are fighting. Or think about those bereaved in Ukraine whose family has just been wiped out by a missile strike. Do you think they would think life with God would be boring? Some are trying to survive being trafficked to other countries and places. Some live in neighborhoods ruled by drug gangs. Some risk everything to leave their homeland and illegally try to enter other countries because life is so bad where they are at. Think about the desperation and horrible circumstances that must impact those decisions.

Then think about the people who live among us who have severe health issues and live with deep pain daily; or serious relationship problems or dysfunctional families. Think of those with dementia or Alzheimer's.

Life with God includes taking in His beautiful creation, freedom from pain, in fellowship with others, living in a resurrection body and looking forward to enjoying the immeasurable riches of His grace towards us in Christ Jesus looks infinitely better. Yet if we're enjoying a pretty good life, we need to recognize God has abundantly blessed us. So instead of ignoring or downplaying the potential of life in God's presence, get ready for life that blows away the greatest life imaginable on earth. No. It won't be boring, way better than the must exiting life ever lived on earth.

This brings us to a very serious question about that this discussion might raise. Some of us here right now or watching online currently do not experience a good life. Life has been hard, difficult, discouraging and hopeless. Life with God sounds incredible. **If life in God's presence is so great, why**

**not go there now?** This is a serious and viable option that many consider when in a depression or facing very tough life circumstances. Some of you with us today or watching online may struggle with suicidal thoughts. Or you may live with someone or have a family member who struggles in this way.

So why not go to heaven now? Randy Alcorn in his book about heaven writes. “As long as God keeps you here on Earth, it’s exactly where he wants you. He’s preparing you for the coming ages. Through your suffering, difficulty and depression, He’s expanding your capacity for eternal joy.” Yet depression and suicidal thoughts can be so debilitating. Many Godly people have or are experiencing this. So how can we address this?

Someone named Christine Chappell talks about this. She is the author of “Help, I’ve been diagnosed with a mental disorder,” “Help, my teen is depressed,” and “Clean Home, Messy Heart: Promises of Renewal.” She serves as Outreach Director and Hope and Help Podcast for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship. <https://www.christinemchappell.com/podcast/>

This is what she writes. I think she has struggled with suicidal thoughts herself. “When the darkness of depression and despair is pressing, remember that you are a walking target of God’s relentless mercy. Our Father has a special place in his heart for those vulnerable to fierce mental assaults. Psalm 34:18 states “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” While our desires to escape the pain can shame us into feeling worthless, his voice reminds us, “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

She goes on. “But more than arguing against the wretched extremes of suicide’s always and never, the tender mercy of God steps down into our pain, pursuing us in the shadows of death where we lie, and commits to remain there as a light to guide our feet away from the snares (Luke 1:78–79). God joins us in our pain. It is a fierce, mysterious fight against unspoken thoughts and imaginings, but not one uncommon to man (1 Corinthians 10:13). You’re not alone or the only one who has ever struggled with such thoughts. While healing from these low seasons of darkness is no simplistic equation, the

truths of God's character and our identity in Christ remain simple enough: From the foundation of the world, he has always loved us, and into eternity future, we will never be separated from him.

These eternal extremes, won by Christ on the cross, act as our only shield against the wretched extremes suicidal contemplations mutter. The always and never of suicide are no match for the always and ever of God's faithful love."<sup>1</sup> On top of this, Alcorn says this. "If you are considering taking your own life, recognize this as the devil's temptation. Jesus said that Satan is a liar. He lies because he wants to destroy you. Don't listen to the liar. Listen to Jesus the truth teller. When He's done, He will take you home in his own time and way.

If you have suicidal thoughts right now or you're watching online, please call someone immediately or you can call 780-482-HELP or 780-482-4357. Their lines are open 24/7. They have many helpful resources with people who are highly trained, compassionate and understanding. They will offer immediate assistance. Then when you get stabilized, continue to discover God's good purposes for you and His deep love for you. These will endure through the rest of your life and into eternity.

So we've looked at what God's love will be like in the coming ages. He saved us and raised us up with Christ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. We've looked at some questions that some may have about the next life. Will it really be good? Yes, it will be worth far more than we can imagine. Won't it be boring? No, It will be more exciting and satisfying than the best life on earth. Why not go now? In God's wisdom, He has us here and now for His good purposes. He comes into the dark places to lead us out by His light.

Finally, **how does it matter today? Since God will show His love for us in the coming ages, we must pray now for strength to grasp its multiple dimensions.** I get this from Ephesians 3:17-19. "I pray that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth (width) and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with the fullness of God." Notice he prays that they may have strength

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/wretched-extremes>

to comprehend something. What is that something – The breadth and length and height and depth: 4 dimensions of Christ's love for us. So he prays that they might have strength to grasp or comprehend the multi-dimensional love of Christ. His love is so vast and so varied that we need strength to understand it and grasp it. But when we do, it fills us with the fullness of God. When we are full of God, we have strength and power for life. He will keep us going until He returns or calls us home.

So we need to pray this for ourselves and for one another. Maybe, instead of praying for some solution we think needs to happen, we need to pray for greater perspective of Christ's vast love for us in the midst of whatever is happening. I want to pray that for you now.