

Let us pray,

Lord, remind us to always have our minds set on you and your kingdom, now and eternal.

Amen.

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What does heaven look like?

I want you to close your eyes.

Now imagine your own personal heaven.

What does it smell like?

What does it feel like? Is it a cool and comfortable 72 degrees?

Or do you like it hotter or colder?

Who is in your own personal heaven? Family, Friends, neighbors, enemies?

Now comes the most important question of them all.

When you were thinking about your own personal heaven, was Jesus there?

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Did Jesus even make it into the top 10?

I find that so much of what we wish for in heaven is about what we want heaven to be like.

And of course, there is nothing inherently wrong with that.

If I am going to live for eternity, I certainly would like to enjoy my time there right?

But I think for many of us, myself included, Jesus sometimes gets a back seat in the whole heaven imagination.

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We must ask the question, if the only person we get to see in heaven is Jesus, would that be enough?

Is Jesus enough?

Im not going to lie, that is a tough question.

Tougher than maybe we realize.

Because to be honest with you, id love to see my Gram again.

Id love to see my great grandparents who watched my brother and I a lot when we were young.

Id love to see my family dogs that passed away.

I also had a guinea pig that I would love to see again, she was potty trained, true story.

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You know, sometimes I fear that Jesus is just a gate to us sometimes.

That he is just the barrier to us getting to those whom we truly love.

Jesus, I fear, becomes more of a means to an end, rather than the end itself.

Now, Jesus knows that we have loved ones.

Jesus knows that we want to be with our family.

But Jesus also doesn't want to be a tool.

Instead Jesus wants us to accept him into our family, to be one of those loved ones that we can't wait to see in heaven.

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You see, God doesn't want to be used, just as we ourselves do not want to be used.

It is not a good feeling when we find ourselves in a relationship where we notice that the only reason the other person is sticking around is because they either need what we can provide, or like being taken care of.

But if they could find another better option, they would leave in a heart beat.

This is what Adam and Eve did to God in the Garden of Eden.

God provided them everything they could ever want, they were in heaven, and yet when given the chance to have something “more,” they chose to leave God in the hopes of becoming like God.

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God doesn’t want us to see God just as a tool to get to our family and friends.

Or just for something better.

God wants to be loved.

This is why it is so brutally important that we understand what God has done for us and how God has saved us.

We are not means to an end for God.

We are the end.

We are the reason for all of this.

We are the reason that Jesus died on the cross.

We are the reason that all of this was created.

We are the reason for heaven.

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We are part of God's family because God loves us.

And God's love for us is not conditional.

And all God wants from us in return, is the same kind of love.

God wants us to choose God, not because of what God has done for us.

But because we want to be with God.

God is so desperate for us to love God, that God is willing to go to many lengths to bring us to him.

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Again, God wants us to love God because of love itself, and not because of what God has done for us or will do for us.

Loving someone because of what they can do for you, is not love.

And that is why the salvation of our souls has to be unconditional.

It has to have no strings attached.

It has to be based on freely given love and sacrifice.

Because if God wants us to love him with no conditions, then God must love us with no conditions.

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But here is the thing.

The kingdom of heaven may not have conditions for entry, but God still encourages us to pay attention, to want it.

God comes to us so often in whispers, in the silence, in the quiet parts of life.

God's salvation of the world, came through the crucifixion of a nomadic Jew, that was crucified with two other people.

This was not a spectacular event, this was just another Friday for the Romans.

The only people who knew what was happening, were those paying attention.

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So when we think about heaven, how are we paying attention?

And most importantly, who are we paying attention too?

May we continue to grow and learn to put Jesus before all else.

To pay attention to what Jesus wants, because what Jesus wants is what we should want.

And to remember that heaven may not be exactly how we envision it, but when we get there, we can trust that it is what we will need, because Jesus will be there.

May God's blessings be upon all of those that have passed from this plane of existence to the eternal one, and may God's blessings be especially prevalent upon us who remain.

May Jesus be enough, and may we learn to love God, the way God loves us.

Amen.

