



Week of November 13 – HEAVEN (PART 2)

Overview:

What happens after you die? Is hell real? What does heaven look like? Does it even matter? The nature of heaven, hell, and everything in between have been the subject of intense debate within the church for millennia. In this series, we will discuss what the Bible says, how culture has led us so far from the truth, and how a correct understanding of eternity can give us not only hope for the future, but purpose for our lives in the here and now.

Group Objectives:

Relationships and Life Transformation are the primary purpose of community groups

- Reflect on this past Sunday's message and other devotional reading.
- Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members.
- Have each person contemplate God's heavenly throne room and how it can alter our earthly perspective.

DNA statement(s) tie-in:

- *We are empowered by the Holy Spirit*—The Holy Spirit within us enables us to live life beyond belief—a life filled with joy, purpose, and power. We live in a supernatural reality that includes yet transcends the physical universe.

Conversation Starters:

- What is the most beautiful place you have been? Is it nature or a city? What is one place you would like to see?

Listening to God

- Where did you see God at work last week? How were you able to join him?

Learning from God's Word: Bible Study Discussion

We are created to create. As image bearers, God gifted us with rich imagination so we could reflect his eternal glory into the world through art. The manifestation of this art is different for everyone, but no gift is more valuable than the next. Each member of the body has its own unique contribution. Encourage your group to lean into their gifts—whatever they may be—and discover how they can use them to communicate the glory of God.

Before discussion begins, gather some material the group can use for drawing or writing. Blank paper, pens, makers, crayons—whatever is available. Distribute these items among group members

- **Read Ezekiel 1:4-28, Revelation 4-5**

During and after the reading, allow time for the group to respond to the images of God's throne room found in these passages. This could come in many forms: drawing the scene described, highlighting a color, listing sounds, writing verses/songs/poems/prayers which come to mind. There is no right or wrong, simply space to respond. If anyone struggles, suggest they spend the time re-reading and meditating on one of the passages.

- Invite your group to share what they created. What stood out to them?
 - What do these passages tell you about God?
 - Why do you think so many elements are described as "like" something we see on earth?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 2:9, John 14:1-6, Philippians 1:20-26**
- As believers, how are we to view eternity? What promises do we have?
- According to Paul, what is our purpose here? How do we balance desire for heaven and our responsibilities in Christ?

Leaning into Obedience:

- What does heaven have to do with your day-to-day?
 - Is imagining eternity helpful or frustrating?
- How can images of God's throne room encourage you in your daily walk?
- How would living every day with eternity in mind change your world?
- How do you sense God calling you to respond to this passage?
 - Is there an example to follow? A command to obey?
- How can the group encourage you this week as you respond?

Prayer Prompts:

- Invite members of the group to share personal prayer requests.
- Allow time for silent reflection on the following questions.
Where can I bring the beauty of heaven into my world today?
- Option: Recite the Beatitudes (see below). Encourage your group to reflect on the images of God we discussed earlier and how that great God values the humblest of people.

Matthew 5:3-10

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.