

## "I Have Hope for Heaven"

More than anything else, I want to live with Jesus in heaven. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." You may want to go to heaven, but are you willing to truly follow Jesus? Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God teaches us the truth in His Word, the Bible. He doesn't tease us with empty promises or give us false hope. God tells us what we most need to know to live the best life on earth and to receive an inheritance in heaven. Our life in Christ is indeed an abundant life, and nothing could be more important than spending an eternity in heaven with God our Father. We're in the business of helping people to find the truth, to be saved, and to go to heaven. Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and we want to be a part of your life each week.

Our hope for heaven comes from believing the promises of God found in Scripture and knowing that they're true. Jesus promised in John 14:1 to 3, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." What could be better than spending an eternity in the house of God with our Lord Jesus?

Romans 8:17 reminds us that if we're children of God then, "we are heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ." We should all want our names to be written in book of life, so that we may have a home in heaven. In Christ we have a living hope for an inheritance with Christ, and nothing we possess on earth is as valuable as a home with Him.

Now we offer this study on having hope for heaven free! And if you'd like a printed copy or the booklet, When I Have Christ, and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have many free programs and materials on our website, [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). You can also see us anytime on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, read from 1 Peter 1:3 to 7, and we'll explore how we have hope in Christ for heaven.

Our reading today comes from the first letter of Peter chapter 1 verses 3 to 7. And talks about our home in heaven.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Oh what a wonder promise of a living hope. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that You give us hope. And Father we're thankful we it in Christ Jesus who loved us, died for our sins and rose again. And Father we pray that we may always do Your will and love You and love others. This is our pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Our inheritance in heaven is reserved especially for us by the power of God. God will reveal that inheritance to us at the last day when the Lord Jesus returns to take us home with Him. Now heaven is an eternal, blessed, pure, place filled with joy and love. And God will welcome us to that home He prepared for us in the most lavish and wonderful way. Heaven! We have a living hope!

Jesus is eagerly waiting for the day that He brings us home! And God longs for His children to come home and live with Him forever. Glorious and marvelous describe the day when God's children come home to heaven. The Lord Jesus said shortly before His death in John 14:1 to 3 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms (or dwelling places). If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."

Jesus is now preparing your place. It's greater and grander than anything you've known in this life. The Bible says in Ephesians 2:4 to 7, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." We cannot conceive the joy, love, and peace being in heaven will bring to us. We can't afford to miss heaven.

Matt 19:16 to 22 says: And behold, a man came up to him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to him, "All these I have kept. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

My friend, you can be moral and still not please God. Good morals by themselves won't save you. This young man wrongly put his money in front of God and allowed it to keep Him from following Jesus. You'll remember the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:24 that, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [that is money]." If you let anything come between you and God, you have chosen to separate yourself from God.

Someone else will likely say to the Lord, "well, I'm a Christian; my parents grandparents were Christians. We went to church every Sunday," or "my father was a preacher," or "my mother was a Sunday school teacher." You know some people think because they are kin to a deeply religious person, that this is enough to save them. Well a pedigree might impress some people, but a pedigree is not enough to guarantee entrance into heaven.

The apostle Paul once spoke of his religious background, which was most impressive to some. But he realized that having a good background didn't make one right with God. You remember the inspired apostle said in Philippians 3:7 to 8, "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ." You see there was something better than his Jewish heritage and that something was Jesus Christ himself. He'd give it all up to know Jesus.

And some will look at the works and assume their works should lead to their salvation. In Luke 18:9 to 14 the Lord told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: that, "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' Well, you might notice that even Jesus got tired of hearing this man read his resume about how good he was.

And then the Lord speaks about another man. But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' (and then Jesus said) I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." Now appealing to all our good works doesn't work with God, because our good works don't cancel out our sins. Did you hear that? God doesn't use a balance to weigh the good with the bad. Good works do not atone for sin and cannot earn you a place in heaven.

God's grace gives us the opportunity to go to heaven. God's grace does what we by ourselves cannot do. The tax-collector of Luke 18 said, "God be merciful to me, (and the New American Standard says,) the sinner." Any appeal for salvation must ultimately rest on the grace and mercy of God. It recognizes the gracious Father must tell us how to have access to His grace. We can't access it by ourselves. We must act by faith in what God teaches. If God saves us, we must pay close attention to what He desires of us.

Can anyone ever do enough for salvation? For heaven? For all our blessings? For eternal life? For eternal joy, eternal fellowship, eternal health, and an eternal inheritance? No. My friend, if you could live a hundred lives of a hundred years and fill each one with constant service, you couldn't do enough to earn a place in heaven. No one is good enough. The Bible says in Romans 3 verse 10 that, "There is none righteous, no, not one." I can't live good enough on my own to please God. And nobody can. We're helpless and we need the grace of God.

The word 'grace' refers to a gift, and gifts are not earned. They are freely given. Our forgiveness, our salvation, our relationship with God is a gift. And we possess this gift because of the blood of Jesus Christ. Now gifts are free but they're not cheap—and they should never be cheapened by being taken for granted. Wives are a wonderful gift to their husbands, but they're not cheap or frivolous. Children are gifts from God according to Psalm 127 verse 3, but they must not be taken for granted. Children are a great responsibility. And just because something is a gift does not mean that it is cheap or trivial.

Some people cheapen grace by thinking the grace of God means they have no responsibility at all. I'm amazed at the common belief that people think that they will go to heaven regardless of how they have lived. People imagine they don't need to change their moral lives. Or they think they don't have to serve the Lord daily. But the Bible teaches exactly the opposite. We are saved to be different. Oh I know the song "Just as I Am." We all come to God as sinners needing the grace of God; but grace won't excuse immoral behavior. It expects our lives to change, to be like Christ. Listen to what the Bible says in Titus 2 verses 11 to 14: "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." We're saved to be changed people. So don't cheapen the gift of grace by living a worldly life. Salvation ought to make a difference in how you live.

Now if God's grace is what saves us, then we need to know how God makes His grace available to us. If He gives forgiveness and He gives this forgiveness and eternal life as a gift, then we should want it for ourselves. And we should want it for everyone that we know. If someone is going to give me a priceless gift, I'm going to do whatever, whatever he asks. I'm not going to substitute my own way; I'm going to listen to Him and do just what He desires. I'm going to make it my aim to please Him. I won't try to change anything but simply believe and obey Him according to His terms. Why? Because I love Him.

To enjoy God's blessing, I must trust God and His Word. The Bible says in Hebrews 11:6 that, "without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." Now trusting God means trusting that His ways are better than mine. Now I know that God knows more than I do about spiritual matters. It means I'm going to listen to God and do what He says.

So, when God asks me to repent of my sins, I'm going to repent. The Bible says in Acts 17:30 to 31, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead." You see repentance is necessary to have eternal life.

And, when the Lord commands me to be baptized, I won't question it. Being baptized is really not something that we do; it is actually something done to us. Physically a baptizer immerses us in water, but spiritually God acts upon us. The notion that baptism is a work of man ignores what the Bible says about baptism. Colossians 2:12 to 13 says, "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him (Jesus) from the dead. And you being dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive with Him, having graciously forgiven us all our transgressions."

You see being baptized is an act of faith in what God did by raising Jesus from the dead. In baptism God unites us with the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection. And in baptism God raises us up from spiritual death and forgives all our transgressions. God is the active one in our being baptized, and we are passive. In baptism God works on us. He causes our new birth and makes us His child in baptism. He adds us to the church when we're baptized. And we're united with Christ in baptism, and He has given us the living hope of heaven.

Let's pray together. Oh Father we're thankful that You had a plan for our lives. Help us to be obedient and loving toward that plan and to do whatever You ask us to do. And to do Your will always. In Jesus name, Amen.

Don't let anything keep you from a heavenly inheritance with Jesus Christ. You can be a fellow heir with Christ. And don't let anger and hatred keep you from heaven. You remember the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:14 to 15, "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

Don't let a lack of faith keep you from heaven. Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who draws near to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." You can build your faith by studying the Scriptures. "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10 and verse 17). Don't let failing to repent keep you from heaven. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 13:3, "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

And don't let people deceive you about baptism. You must let God do His work on you when you're baptized. You must be baptized to be saved and free from sin (1 Peter 3 and verse 21). You must be

baptized to be born again and have newness of life (John 3 and verse 5 and Romans 6 verses 3 to 7). Saul of Tarsus prayed and fasted for three days and nights before Ananias came to him and said, "Now why do you delay? Rise up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (Acts 22 verse 16). Now Saul of Tarsus still had a dirty soul that needed to be washed in the blood of Jesus, and you see, prayer alone will not do that. The Scriptures have no example of what some call the sinners' prayer. What we do find is the necessity of being baptized.

Now we pray that today's study about having hope for heaven has helped you see God's gracious plan for your life. If you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy of this lesson or the booklet, When I Have Christ, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now there's a schedule of our programs and a map of churches in your area at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). You can watch SEARCH on YouTube anytime! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" and like the programs that you watch. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God and to be saved.

Show God that you love Him by worshiping at church. Oh I tell you you need a church family. And if you can attend worship, don't neglect to do it. There's probably a church of Christ near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about the program. And as always, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.