

## Paul Waud Memorial Service

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What happens when a saint dies?

The Bible gives us many answers that we believe by faith.

Though we cannot see beyond this life, we have eye witnesses  
and the instruction of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.

Essentially, a believer has eternal life.

Jesus spoke to a teacher named Nicodemus, telling him that all his religion and knowledge wasn't going to bring him life. Jesus' words were specific,

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again  
he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (Jn. 3:3)

Later in the chapter Jesus gave us this magnificent promise,

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that  
whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (3:16)

Many other scriptures tell us that Jesus brought eternal life to a dying people.

One day at the grave of His dear friend, Lazarus Jesus raised him to life.

He spoke with Martha, Lazarus' sister, just before that great miracle:

“Your brother will rise again.”

Martha said to Him.

“I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”

Jesus said to her,

“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will  
live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me  
will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:23-26)

After this Jesus called out and Lazarus was raised from the dead.

I can imagine the joy and confusion that must have followed.

Weeping and sorrow instantly became tears of joy; from wailing to worship.

That's what eternal life will be like. When someone dies he will step into a lighted place and see rejoicing people, even familiar voices, cheering and singing songs.

Jesus before He raised Lazarus, John records that *Jesus wept*.

If I were about to raise someone from the dead, I would be giddy with laughter. This reveals two things about death, it is an occasion for both grief and rejoicing.

At the time of someone's death, it is a time of grief; but at the resurrection, it will be an occasion for rejoicing all the more.

Paul wrote,

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

We who believe *grieve with hope*. Our hope is in the promised resurrection of all who are in Christ. That's why the term “sleep” is used for death – it's a reminder that death isn't permanent; but is like sleep. I've never met anyone who is sad about someone taking a nap or who goes to sleep at night. We know that they will awake at the right time, because sleep is a temporary state. So it is with the death of a saint.

Paul wrote these comforting words to the Philippians:

For our citizenship is in heaven,

from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;  
 who will transform the body of our humble state  
 into conformity with the body of His glory,  
 by the exertion of the power that He has  
 even to subject all things to Himself. (Phil. 1:20-21)

The eternal state will be complete with new bodies, like Christ's glorified body. It will also be in a place called heaven, which the Bible describes in beautiful and picturesque language.

“And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them. And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any

death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” (Rev. 21:2-4)

While we have many pictures and statements about heaven we have few complete descriptions. Dr. Jeffers, who had recently completed a book on heaven, says that the reason so little is said about the greatness and glories of heaven is that there would probably be *‘mass suicides of people wanting to get there.’* He went on to say that when a young boy receives his supper His mother doesn’t serve the dessert with the meal or else he would be tempted to eat the ice cream first, and skip his food altogether.

The apostle Paul visited Paradise but was forbidden to speak of the things he heard and saw. He was also given a thorn in the flesh to keep him from getting proud from his experience due to the greatness of the heavenly vision.

Knowledge of heaven in detail is not revealed simply because it is too great and would hinder our life calling while we are here on desolate earth. It is enough to know that it is waiting for everyone who knows Christ as their personal Savior.

Paul often spoke of what seemed to be his favorite verse: Titus 3:5

“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5-7).

This verse speaks volumes:

- We are not saved by our works but by God’s mercy in Christ.
- We are justified by His grace so we can have eternal life.

I will close with a few reminders:

- Salvation is a free gift; we receive it by faith.
- Jesus came to purchase our salvation.
- A gift can be offered but must ultimately be received.