

this world, it is a sober thought that we are made of dust and to dust we shall return. How are you comforted by the scriptures that tell us of heaven? What are your hopes of going to heaven? Write your initial thoughts here, praying for God to open your heart and mind to the great possibilities of eternal life.

Thursday, May 13

Read John 17:1-11. What do you think of when you hear the word “heaven?” Do you imagine angels strumming harps while sitting on clouds? Do you visualize heaven as beautiful woods or a mountain summit? Throughout history, many images have been created to represent heaven. All this is good and fine; however, the essential worth of heaven is that we will be in God’s presence! Heaven is not so much a realm as it is a relationship; not so much a kingdom as it is a kinship. Heaven is really about our relationship with God; but not just when we die – it’s about our relationship with God *now*! We pray “on earth as it is in heaven” every week when we pray The Lord’s Prayer during worship. Jesus proclaimed that the Kingdom of Heaven is near. How might you experience heaven on earth right now? Imagine heaven not as a future destination but a reality today. Contemplate that thought and write your reflections here.

Friday, May 14

As you read John 17:1-11 a final time this week monitor your comfort level while reading. How do you feel about this talk of Jesus praying for you, asking for God’s protection for you, indicating that there is life that is eternal? Of course, there are uncomfortable times on this side of eternity; think about Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. The question was asked, “Why don’t we talk about heaven anymore?” Is it a comfort thing? Perhaps if we talked about heaven more, we would be more comfortable with talking about it. Write your thoughts here, praying that we all begin to be more comfortable with heaven!

Message Notes – May 9, 2021

Faces Only a Mother (and Jesus) Could Love *

- I. “Hey,” as one cleaning commercial proclaims, “life is _____.”
 - A. Jesus understood. He knew full well that we live in a _____, musty and rusty world and he knew that we would have to learn how to deal with it.
 - B. Remember what the Lord said to Adam, before tossing him out of the Garden of Eden, “You are dust, and to dust you shall _____.”
- II. Just as we live in a world full of dust and dirt, we also live in a world that is full of _____.
 - A. That’s why Jesus prayed at the Last Supper that God would _____ his followers in the midst of this earthly mess.
 - B. Jesus was keenly aware of the _____ of the people with whom he ate that final supper.
 - C. Jesus also saw into their _____ and knew well their imperfections and foibles – the stains upon their very souls.
- III. Jesus saw beyond the dust and dirt in the world to a spotless heavenly destiny – pure _____.
 - A. This is not to say that Jesus overlooked the _____ world in which we live.
 - B. Jesus was painfully aware the world could be a _____ place as well.
 - C. We are _____, up to our necks in _____, breathing _____ and eating _____, day after day after day.
 - D. But Jesus also knew that this world is really a temporary place for our souls and bodies to _____ and _____.

*John 17:1-11

- E. Jesus asked for God to _____ us from the grit and grime of day-to-day existence and usher us into a perfectly pure paradise.
- IV. So why don't we talk about _____ anymore?
- A. Philip Yancy reminds us that historically, every age before the modern one assumed an _____.
- B. The point is that our _____ destiny is not dust. Our final destination is pure paradise.
- C. Heaven is not so much a realm as it is a _____; not so much a kingdom as it is a _____.
- V. While we may not know what heaven looks like, we can know what it feels like: an _____, loving and eternal relationship with the one true God.
- A. Jesus reminds us that we “do not belong to the _____” (verse 16)
- B. Jesus said to his Heavenly Father, “my _____ are yours.”
- C. We're _____ people.
- D. Because God looks upon us and sees faces only a mother (and Jesus) could _____.

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, May 10

A commercial for a cleaning product from years ago proclaimed, “Hey, life is messy.” That company wanted people to buy their product, but their proclamation bears some significant truth; life is messy. Life is not just messy because of the dirt and dust in which we live; relationships, social interaction and yes, life itself – are messy! What do you think of when you hear the words “life is messy?” How is life messy? How is your life messy? What impact does the messiness of life have on you? What impact does the messiness of life have on your soul? Contemplate these

questions and record your reflections here. Pray that God will give you the wisdom to clarify your reflections.

Tuesday, May 11

Read John 17:1-11. You may want to read it a second time, slowly and with the purpose of understanding what Jesus is actually saying to his “Heavenly Father.” This is an awesome passage of scripture when you comprehend that Jesus is praying for this followers – including us! That fact alone should give to us comfort. What Jesus prays for specifically is for God to protect us.

From what do you need God to protect you? Don't be dismissive of this question. What temptations challenge you? What is holding you back from a deeper relationship with God and with others in your life? Perhaps some of your closest relationships are impacted by that from which you need to be protected. Rejoice in Jesus' prayer for God to protect you and contemplate what that means for you – not for others or everybody – for you. Offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God as you record your thoughts here.

Wednesday, May 12

Read John 17:1-11 and John 14:1-7. Jesus speaks of no longer being in the world (John 17:11) and in John 14 He indicated that he is leaving this world to prepare a place for us. Pastor Jack, when leading a funeral service will often quote the Apostle Paul, “absence from the body is to be present with the Lord.” (II Corinthians 5) Paul also calls our bodies tents; they are temporary shelters for our souls here on earth.

While we have the hope to be in God's presence when we leave