

Heaven

When I think of heaven I think of the “allelous” principle after the New Testament Greek word for one another. It is because of Calvary that we experience in this life a taste of the richness of fellowship with one another that will be ours in its fulness in the Kingdom to come. The Allelous principle describes what heaven is going to be like.

- “comforted together” (Romans 1:12);
- “kindly affectioned one to another” (Romans 12:10);
- “same mind one toward another” (Romans 12:16);
- “edifying another” (Romans 14:19);
- “likeminded” (Romans 15:5);
- “Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God” (Romans 15:7);
- “admonishing one another” (Romans 15:14);
- “having the same care one for another [without partiality or favoritism]” (1 Corinthians 12:25);
- “So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat [the Lord’s Supper], wait for one another [and see to it that no one is left out].” AMP 1 Corinthians 11:33
- “by love serving one another” (Galatians 5:13);
- “With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;” Ephesians 4:2
- “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his “neighbor: for we are members one of another. “ Ephesians 4:25
- “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” Ephesians 4:32
- “Submitting yourselves one to another” Ephesians 5:21
- “Bearing ... one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2)”
- “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” Philippians 2:3
- “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;” Colossians 3:9

Heaven

- “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another,” Colossians 3:13
- “comfort one another “ 1 Thessalonians 4:18
- “Use hospitality one to another without grudging.” 1 Peter 4:9
- “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” (John 13:34)
- ...and more.

“The gospel was plowing new ground.” Someone once exclaimed, “Understanding ... kinship ... makes us better able to understand the responsibility of Christians to ...live in harmony with one another.” Being a Christian is not just “me and Jesus. I am ... part of God’s household. ... I become part of His we.” It is not surprising to hear, then, that sin “...alienates from God’s community.” And that God “... doesn’t want to save me as an individual, God saves us into ... a community.” Unwillingness to share our Christian experience, disinterest in assembling with other believers, disunity on any level, is not a mark of a believer who is fully appreciating and appropriating Christ’s death and resurrection (Hebrews 10:25).

The closest I can come to giving this thought a biblical base is Philippians 1:27, “our citizenship is in heaven.” In the Epistle of Diognetus, Christians are said to be “passing time in this life but will be citizens in heaven.” It will be different than this life, for sure! And it will be “family.” I will be reintroduced to so many saints, some who might have once lived in my own neighborhood, even in my house. I think I will remember mother even if she is sweeter and younger and however God designs our glorified bodies. I’ll leave it thereonly keep in heart the truth that when God saved us, He introduced us into His larger family and we have been welcomed as one of them. All this because God’s Son, Jesus, is my brother. Let me say it once more to every person of faith, “Welcome to the family!”

Heaven

So heaven will be much more than a place where sickness, disease and death cannot follow.

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Imagine yourself a citizen of a nation where no one owned anything but where its people were notwithstanding richer than had each one owned everything. [Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:3].

Imagine being a member of a community in which every need you had was met by someone else in that community even before you asked while everything you had you joyfully gave away to others in their need just because you wanted to.

Imagine a world where no want existed. Imagine a world where its people sought to give what they had away to others with a natural and spontaneous wholeheartedness and not out of duty or obligation or requirement. Imagine being blessed with such an over abundance that your heart was as full as your pantry and that you just had to seek out others to share it with.

Imagine now that this was a society where there was no greed, no hoarding, no collecting, no need to save anything, no selfish desires because there was no want. Imagine a place where there was no money because there was no need for it, no cause for it. Imagine: no “me above you” where no one put themselves first. Where truly and in a practical and real sense the first [wanting the best for me] was now last and the last [caring about others] was first.

Imagine a world where there is no carnality, no temptation, no personal hunger for things we should not have and do not need. No me only, no cravings of the flesh, no one crying out, “Gimme, gimme, gimme!”

Heaven

“So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” [1 Corinthians 15:42-44].

Imagine a world where there was no prejudice, no differences among its people that labeled them in any way. Imagine a nation that could not be subdivided, where all were identified by one purpose, one desire, one principle, in a sense, one overarching priority and passion.

Imagine a world without law, without restrictions, without restraints or conditions attached to anything its people did. A world of a freedom in every sense unconditional and absolute. A place where hinderances didn't exist, where what one wanted to do or say or be, they could because they were not just free but had all the means and resources and strength and resolve to do it or be it.

Imagine a land where there are no measurements taken because everything is in an unlimited supply, a world where no one is less than another in any sense, where comparisons among its citizens served no purpose and would no longer be sought for.

Imagine a culture devoid of all abusive or divisive language, where there was no word for hate or revenge or punishment. Imagine a world where life was so full that language could no longer be commissioned to point out differences or disparities or weaknesses or poverty or faults of any kind. And, may we add, a place where no one will ever be bored.

And imagine a world where no lies or deception of any kind existed, where Truth is all that is ever spoken or expressed. Imagine a place where fulfillment and happiness and peace are

Heaven

no longer distinguishable experiences and they now must be the definition of a new word—unthinkable and unknown in this world.

Imagine a kingdom run only on the principle of God's Grace which must be shared or given away without condition or favor and without limit. Imagine a love as deep as an ocean from which a soul can drink with abandonment, but it is also a love that cannot be quenched because like everything else given to us it is to be given away. It becomes a flowing river, an ever living source of grace through us to others. Imagine a world governed by this grace!

Now imagine that you are a citizen of this land and everything about you that distinguishes you somehow as a individual, your personality by which everyone else knows it's you, is not just welcomed into this world but has become a vital part of it. Imagine a world where no one is marginalized or made to feel inferior or excluded in any real or imagined sense. You were never more yourself, whom God made you to be and who you wanted to be, than you are here. You are in every sense, at last home, at last able to freely express yourself as you are. You sense God created you for this world and at long last you are here.

Imagine a family reunion but on a level of joy that in our present world and condition would be thought unnatural—a truly extended family that embraces every son and daughter of God.

Imagine ultimately a world where all we will ever need is first Christ and then each other because all we will ever need and have ever needed was and will remain to be like Christ. They say: Instruments tuned to a tuning fork are tuned to each other and so will all of us be: Christ in us the hope of glory.