

Like a CHILD

Sunday 26th August 2018

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Revelation 21:1-5a

Is there a McDonald's in Heaven?

The bible gives us clues to what heaven is like, but mostly heaven is full of mystery. Allan's message this week encouraged us to think of heaven in three distinct ways:

1. Heaven: Then
2. Heaven: In the end
3. Heaven: Now

Take a moment to share with the group.

- **How often do you think of heaven?**
- **What types of images come to mind as you think of heaven?**

1 Heaven: Then

When we think of heaven it's important to think of the broader narrative of God's story. Heaven as it was "then" is a reminder that God created Eden as Heaven – a place where God would dwell with people. The separation between Earth and Heaven, between us and God is a result of rebellion and sin.

Revelation gives us a picture of God's great reconciliation – a new creation, a new heaven and new earth where God and people dwell together again.

Read Revelation 21:1-5

- **What would you say is the most exciting aspect of this passage as it describes heaven?**
- **Thinking about the brokenness you see in the world around you, how does heaven change your perspective?**
- **How might you explain this 'perspective' to a non-believer?**

Heaven when you die.

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Read Philippians 1:21-26

Paul writes that he himself feels it would be better to die and be with Christ!

- **Do you have this same feeling at times?**

Paul also recognises (verse 24-26) that despite his desire for heaven, there is much to be done to live faithfully now. Allan challenged us to live each day with the hope, optimism and anticipation of heaven.

2 Heaven: In the end

Revelation speaks to a new and good re-creation - restoration of our broken world: No tears, no pain, no toil, no thorns, no labour – the “Eden qualities” of God’s creation being restored and remade. No need for a temple – the whole of creation is the dwelling place of God.

Heaven as a city:

Revelation describes the heavenly city – not a garden.

- **What do you think this means?**
- **Allan suggested that the image of a city recognises the very best skills, gifts and productivity of humans and that God works to incorporate these efforts into the new creation. How does that make you feel?**

3 Heaven: Now

Read Genesis 28:10-19

The dream of Jacob’s stairway or ladder reminds us that the kingdom of heaven is near. That there is a spiritual reality that we live in now.

- **How close does the ‘Kingdom of Heaven’ feel to you?**
- **When does it feel close? When does it feel distant?**
- **How might you be able to bring the Kingdom of Heaven closer to others?**
- **What other bible passages help remind you of the ‘closeness’ of the kingdom of heaven?**

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Q1 – *Is my life fully open to Heaven's gifts?*

- **Read Luke 11:13 – what specific heavenly gift is Jesus speaking about?**

Q2- *Do I align my will with heaven, daily?*

- **Read John 6:38 – What was Jesus' mission on earth?**
- **What are some ways that we can set a 'heavenly agenda' each day?**
- **How well are you doing at setting – and living – this agenda?**

Q3 – *Are we laying up treasure in heaven?*

- Our everyday choices are an opportunity for us to invest in heavenly treasure.
- **How are you making decisions that invest in Heavenly treasure?**

Q4 – *Am I aware and contributing to the Joy of Heaven?*

Read the first two parables in Luke 14 (verses 1-10)

In these parables, there is the description of rejoicing in heaven.

Allan challenged us not to wait until we get to heaven, but to live lives that start heaven rejoicing before we get there!