

“Christ’s Room and House For You” (John 14:1-14)

For Your Life in Christ for the Week of the Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 22nd, 2011

Saint Paul’s Lutheran Church of Irvine, CA (LCMS)

Rev. Dr. Al Espinosa

Introduction: Heaven!

- A. Famous British Physicist, Stephen Hawking called the notion of heaven this past week a “fairy story” in an interview. He said, “I regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail. There is no heaven of afterlife for broken down computers; that is a fairy story for people who are afraid of the dark.”
- B. Try telling that to 11-year old Colton Burpo whose father Todd wrote his story in an amazing book entitled *Heaven Is for Real*.
 1. At age 4 a ruptured appendix almost killed Colton.
 2. He was in the hospital for 17 days.
 3. During surgery, no one knew that his father was in another room, broken down and praying to the Lord. No one knew where he was except for one person: Colton who was in the middle of surgery! Colton would later tell his parents details about where his parents were, what they were doing, and all of the activity with the medical staff *while he was unconscious in surgery!* He knew details, because he had seen it.
 4. But the story was just getting started: Colton said he went to heaven. This did not come out right away, but only began when his mother asked him in the car if he had memories of being in the hospital. To which Colton said, “Yes, Mommy, I remember – that’s where the angels sang to me.”
 5. He went on to give extraordinary details including having met the big sister he had never met who had died in his mother’s womb that his mother had never told him about. He had also met his great grandfather, but most importantly, he met the Lord Jesus.

-2-

6. He recounted the amazing colors in heaven and the fact that Jesus has what Colton called “markers”. When his father asked him about the markers. Colton said that they were red and then he stood up to show his father where the “markers” were on Jesus. He stood up and held out his right hand, palm up...
7. He also said that there is a lot of color, a lot of people, a lot of angels, and get this: no old people: nobody wears glasses [and] “you’re in like your 20s and 30s.”
- C. As a pastor-theologian I have developed a critical eye and ear over the years for sensationalism and accounts that contradict the Word of God like Harold Camping’s end of the world prediction yesterday. This book from the testimony of this child, however, is compelling.
- D. It reminds me of the account of child prodigy Akiane. She started painting startling and amazing portraits of heaven when she was 4 years old. She claims to have seen what she draws. What is especially amazing about this is that when this occurred, her mother was an atheist. After the witness of her daughter, she is no longer.
- E. Both Colton and Akiane connect heaven to Jesus Christ.
- F. And this is *the* connection is it not?
- G. So many people start their analysis of the idea of heaven as an idea that stands suspended in the imagination of people (like a random thought), but the real approach is that you begin with Jesus Christ. Look at the question of Christ first and if the evidence points to Christ as God, then you cannot put aside what He actually taught: Heaven!

Part I: Why Teach About It At All?

John 14:1a: “Let not your hearts be troubled.”

- A. The old Latin saying, *per ardua ad alta* = “Through difficulties to the heights!” But sometimes times are so difficult you can’t even see the heights!

- B. The original disciples in John 13 had just heard that someone in their own number was going to betray the Lord (13:21), that they would no longer be able to go where Jesus was going (13:33), and that Peter himself was going to deny the Lord three times (13:38). Everything that they were hearing was leading to Jesus' death the very next day on the cross. Do you think they had reason to be troubled?
- C. Do you? We must understand that this is the crux of the spiritual battle and the reason why I gave the children the gift that I did today: our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers over this present darkness and against the spiritual forces of evil (Ephesians 6:12). And those forces are designed for one thing and one thing only: to strip your faith; to make things seem so dark and so dreary and so hopeless, that you give up, but Christ comes! He is stronger than anything that may attack you!

Part II: The Solution to the Attacks!

John 14:1b: "Believe in God; believe also in me."

- A. Both times Jesus used the word "believe" He used it in the imperative. A command! "Believe!" But it is connected to another crucial word: *kardia* = *heart*. In the Semitic sense of will and emotion that is formed in a personal trust and relationship with the Heavenly Father.
- B. This is why this whole Sunday emphasizes prayer. Prayer is the heartbeat of faith; prayer nurtures your relationship with the Father; we are always praying, "Our Father..." and today's appointed Psalm says this:

Psalm 146:3: "Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation."

- C. We are warned of our tendency: when our hearts are troubled, we run to man's resources, but they fail!
- D. Instead, the Lord leads us to Himself:

Psalm 146:5-6: "Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, ⁶who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever."

Part III: And to Encourage Us the Reward is Great: Heaven!

Philippians 1:21: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

John 14:2: "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?"

- A. That place prepared for you is a "room":
- B. Two senses:
 - 1. "Many rooms" = in the NT culture many dwelling units formed ONE extended household.
 - 2. In 14:23: Jesus describes the Father and Himself coming to make their ROOM with whoever keeps the Word of Christ! This is the mystical union.
- C. Which leads to another ancient understanding of this text: the many rooms might even be the many Christians who are in the one house, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- D. That is, because you are in Christ, you have a place with the King of Heaven. Thus, heaven is for you a guarantee!
- E. To further assure you of this fact, it is true not because of anything you've done, but by the grace of God in Christ.
- F. Jesus is your only way!

John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

Conclusion: Sometimes We Just Feel Out of Place

- A. It's because heaven is your home.
- B. But in the meantime, you have work to do!

John 14:12: "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father."

- C. As His "many rooms"/His people/the Church = Matt. 28!