

No More Good-Bye

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At pretty much every church I've been a part of, there have been people who have moved away for various reasons – people who were great assets to that local church. And even though I knew that they would be a blessing and an asset at their new congregations, it still hurt to part ways. There is a similar hurt when our physical family moves away or when we move away from our family. We aren't able to see each other as often, spend time with each other, enjoy meals together, etc. A greater pain results when someone we lose friends and family to death. At that point, we can't even look forward to seeing them at holidays or other family gatherings.

Thankfully, due to the technology we have today of telephone, email, texting, Facebook, and other forms of social media, we can stay in touch with those who have moved away a lot easier than ever before. It helps to take away some of the sting of not being near them anymore. Of course, we have no way of staying in contact with those who have passed away. Nothing has been or will be invented that will allow that!

However, in each of these situations, as much as we hate being apart from our loved ones, when these loved ones are Christians, we know there will come a time when we never have to say, "Good bye". One day, we will all be together for eternity where nobody moves away and nobody dies!

Have you considered what the appeal of heaven is? In one sense, there is a part of us that wonders what we're going to do for an eternity. Wouldn't it get boring? I love singing hymns, but isn't there just so much of that we can do before we get tired of it? What else is there to do in heaven? I heard one person observe that because our bodies are going to be changed to be immortal, perfect bodies (1 Cor. 15:35-53), there won't be any such thing as being tired. Another person commented that time will not exist, so that will have an impact on how we view activity.

It's true that we don't know all the details (actually, we don't know most of the details), and I don't have all the answers to what heaven will be like. But I do know that most of the appeal, at least for me, will be in the opportunity to be with everyone I love. Of course, that begins with our Father, our brother Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Being able to finally talk to them face to face will be incredible! Can you imagine that? We will be able to talk to God face to face! We can have a conversation with Jesus, one-on-one just like the disciples did when he was on this earth. I long for those conversations!

Being with all of my family and friends that were faithful Christians will also be joyous. Some of my favorite activities and times in this life are those events when I'm with family, especially when it's family we don't get to see very often. Sometimes, it's just

sitting at the table sharing a meal and talking. Sometimes, it's playing a game of Rook. It's our kids playing with their cousins. It's the monthly birthday parties with our church family that we host at our home. It's the potlucks and other get-togethers where we simply spend time eating, talking, playing, and enjoying one another's company. It's that kind of time together that is special. Now imagine that multiplied a hundred-fold and more! Every Christian you've had the pleasure of becoming friends with, every Christian family member that has passed on before you, and all the saints from all time all together for all eternity!

What will we do for an eternity? We will have fellowship for an eternity. We will be able to talk with each other, to enjoy one another's company, to relish in the joy of the new heavens and new earth where righteousness dwells, to praise God for a place where there is no sin and no brokenness. We will be able to reminisce about the struggles of our earthly life and be so grateful that those struggles are over.

I grant that some of this is conjecture. As I said earlier, we're not given all the details. But it seems to me that what the scriptures are pointing to that makes heaven such a wonderful place lies in this very point – we will all be together, and we will be with our God. And it will be a place where the words “good bye” are never uttered again.