

Heaven
Are You Living for Heaven? • Message 2
Bryan Jones
April 26, 2026

Prayer Points for Prayer Time

- **Ask God to help you live with eternity in mind.**
- **Pray that you will be faithful with everything God has given you.**
- **Pray that Brookwood will be a church that truly lives to please God above everything else.**

Worship Psalm:

I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done. I will be filled with joy because of you. I will sing praises to your name, O Most High.

Psalm 9:1-2 (NLT)

Scripture Reading:

For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

2 Corinthians 5:4-10 (NIV)

A. Introduction

You know, there was a popular phrase years ago called YOLO... the idea came from a rapper, and it means...

You only live ... what? That was a test. You aren't supposed to know that... you are only supposed to listen to Christian music... come on!

No, but it means you only live once... the problem is, that's simply not true...

I'm coining a new term today.... you ready for it?... #YOLT... You only live twice...

Now last week, I talked about getting to heaven. That what gets us into heaven is a relationship with Jesus, that you don't want to be judged by the books (or your actions); we want to be judged by the Book of Life, by what Jesus did...

But I want to talk to you about another judgement today that gets a lot of people confused.

The title of today's message is: **Are You Living for Heaven?**

Did you know the New York times obituary department has a grid to determine the successfulness of someone's life...

Ultimately, what they do is take your life story and filter it through the grid and determine how many words you deserve...

So this person's life deserves 300 words, this one is 400 words, this one 600 words... and just maybe this person lived such a life of consequence that they deserve 800 words and a picture...

Now everyone wants to live a life of consequence... a life that matters... but far too many people focus on this life, and they fail to see that what makes a significant life on this earth isn't always what makes a significant life in heaven...

And we fail to realize heaven has a grid to reward us for how we live on this earth!

But a lot of times we don't think about heaven and what's to come...

The other day, Tristan told Steph and me... *I think I want to be a pastor... I want to preach...* and we said, *Really... that's awesome...* He said, *Yeah, I would love to work at a church...* then he said... *I take that back, I think I want to be a Youtuber...*

But here's my point: kids think about what's ahead... and sometimes as we get older... we get so busy with jobs, kids, life, and responsibilities, we forget to dream about what's ahead.

One of the most confusing subjects for a lot of people is the idea of rewards in heaven... We talk about how it's by grace you've been saved... which is true...

But remember what Jonathan Edwards said, *Lord, help me to live with eternity stamped on my eyeballs*. See, he knew there were some kinds of rewards for living for heaven that others who live for themselves miss out on....

And this can create fear and angst for some, and for others it creates hope...

So let me give you some things that will help you live for heaven, that will help you to live for rewards of heaven and not this earth... Got a lot to teach you, buckle up.

B. Are You Living for Heaven?

1.) You won't be JUDGED by sin, but you will be JUDGED by your service to God.

(2 Corinthians 5:7-10. C/R: Matthew 16:27; Acts 18:12)

For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

2 Corinthians 5:7-10 (NIV)

So notice, we live by faith, not by sight... Paul is saying to live with the end in mind... don't live for the pleasures and rewards of earth; live for heaven... live by a faith that causes you to focus on heaven.

Notice it says... the moment you die, you are with God... that's why you don't have to be afraid. There is no spiritual DMV, no long lines... you don't eventually get to be with God. The moment you draw your last breath here, you wake up instantly in the presence of God!

How do we know this? Because it says to be absent of the body is to be present with the Lord.

But notice in verse 10... it says we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ...

Even dogs and cats will have to do this... let me show you a photo... (show cat and dog photo from The Office).

The word judgement seat is a single word in the ancient Greek language... *Bema* literally means "step," as in a raised platform or seat.

A *bema* was a raised platform on which judges sat....judges' seats were higher.. representing ruling authority.

But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat,

Acts 18:12 (NASB)

(Show picture)... so this is where Paul stood and gave an account for his ministry... he was being accused, and he was judged for his actions... and here he was freed and vindicated...

Now Paul uses this same word in 2 Corinthians to talk about the Bema Seat of Christ that all of us will one day stand in front of.

This is for believers only... this is where we are judged not for sin, but for our service for Christ... this is good news because God isn't going to bring up past sins; those are forgiven...

But God is going to ask you what you did with what He gave you... think about it... God has given some of you kids or a spouse, He's given you a church, He's given you a job, skills, talents, and resources... and you're in America... and I know America isn't perfect, but it's one of the greatest countries around... He's given you freedom and opportunities... how are you spending them?

Rewards for how to live...

"For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done."

Matthew 16:27 (NIV)

And you don't have to be afraid... this isn't about your sins... it's about rewarding those who spent their lives for God.

2.) Live to PLEASE God, not for the pleasures of the world.

(2 Corinthians 5:9. C/R: Psalm 90:10-12; 1 Corinthians 9:24-25)

Michael Phelps is one of the greatest Olympic athletes of all time... he won a staggering 28 medals, and 23 of them were gold medals... more than any person in history. The person with the next most gold medals has 9.

What most people don't realize is how intense his training was... His coach spoke about his discipline ... that he would swim six hours a day, six times a week. He had to eat 10,000 calories a day because of how much he was training...he had to make sure he was getting the right amount of sleep and taking ice baths, which aren't from God and won't be in heaven... (I asked Him.) He said no to a lot of social life and other things people his age were doing... Why? Because he had a goal... to stand in front of the world and receive the medal for being one of the world's best swimmers...

He had a goal...

Here's your goal as a Christian...

So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

2 Corinthians 5:9 (NIV)

You have a goal... not to try and get rewards, not to live for pleasures of the world... but to please God.

{Bring rope on stage}... Tug of war... let's go... win in Jesus' name.

Some people live with a goal on this earth, and it's good, but it's fleeting... Paul lived to please God.

Your living section...

Don't live for the pleasures of this world... it's fleeting...

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 (NIV)

Now in Paul's day there was a modern-day Olympics called the Isthmian Games... it was one of the biggest events in the ancient world... people would spend their whole lives training for this... and when they won... they would get... wait for it... a crown of wild celery... and Paul says this is what people are giving their lives for because they had a goal...

The verse above... whoever won would go before the judge who was at the Bema Seat, and they would be crowned... Paul says God will reward those who spend their lives serving Him.

Paul is saying don't spend your life trying to get people to crown you with the pleasures of this world... it's too short... but at the Bema Seat, God will reward those who lived to please Him, to honor Him...

Think about it... the average person lives to be 80... we spend 15 years in childhood... we spend 26 years asleep... and wait for it... another 7 years trying to fall asleep. Then you spend the last 5 years immobile or limited because of aches and pains... so that gives you around 30 years to live for Christ... **IF** you started from the beginning.

But look at this... Paul is saying don't live for this... live for what matters... look how short this is...

Moses wrote:

Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. If only we knew the power of your anger! Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due. Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Psalm 90:10-12 (NIV)

Think about the numbers we know...

Some of us know the numbers on a scale.

We know the numbers in our bank account.

We know the numbers of sports teams records.

We love to give certain numbers of what our kids or grandkids accomplish...

But most of us don't number our days because we think we will live forever...

So let me encourage you... live with the end in mind... Get your eyes on God...

How can you please God?

3.) Be **FAITHFUL** with what God has trusted you with.

(Matthew 25:20-23)

Bloom where you are planted – Go to lunch, be faithful. You’re going to a job that is miserable... be faithful to please God. People are saying, *It should’ve been you...* there is a reward for this.

Some people get stressed out because they go, *I don’t have a big job, or I’m retired, or I’m a stay-at-home mom... how can I live for God?... How can I be rewarded?... My life is mundane and often quite boring...*

“And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much.’”

Matthew 25:20-21a (ESV)

Now listen to what he says to the two-talent servant...

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much.’”

Matthew 25:23a (ESV)

The exact same thing... God rewards you and holds you accountable to what He’s entrusted you with... and some of you, comparison is keeping you from the goal.

If you’re a stay-at-home mom, be faithful to raise godly kids... and pray.

I love what Charles Spurgeon said once...

“That man has not yet learned the true spirit of Christianity who is always saying, ‘I can preach a sermon by faith.’ Yes, sir, but can you make a coat by faith? ‘I can distribute tracts, and visit the district by faith.’ Can you cook a dinner by faith? I mean, can you perform the common actions of the household, and the daily duties which fall to your lot, in the spirit of faith?”

- Charles Spurgeon

Here's the point... honor God and live by faith...

If you’re a businessman or businesswoman, be faithful to speak and live for Jesus... YOU be faithful.

Be faithful with your deeds, your declarations, and your desires... and God will reward that.

He said the exact same thing... but think about this... what does he say to the person who has one talent and buries it?

He says, *You wicked and lazy servant... you could have at least put it in the bank and got a little interest...*

Here's the point... why did he hide it? Because he wasn't certain the master was coming back... If he did come back, he could just dig it up and say, *Here's what you gave me...* but if he didn't, he didn't waste his life living for that master... and here's the point... he got to live how he wanted to...

Too many people say a prayer... then they take their eternity and they bury it... because they wonder, *Is He really coming back?... Is this really real?* So they keep living and focusing on what they want... living how they want to live... doing what they want to do. So to the degree you believe you will stand before Jesus is the degree to which you will throw your life into it.

But church... He is real. And He is really coming back... and you will really stand before Him. So stop burying what He's given you in the ground...

Pour your life into this Book... as God told Joshua, *Meditate on this word day and night*, so your heart doesn't drift away... be faithful with your deeds, your words, and your desires...

Live with the end in mind. He is faithful.