

Have you ever invested a whole lot of your life into something – a marriage, a child, a business, a stock, an education – and then lost it all? Wouldn't that be extremely *troubling* and *painful*?

That's what it was like for the disciples to hear from Jesus that He was going away from them back to heaven: they were very upset. They had left *everything* to follow Jesus. They had put everything on the line for him. And now it seemed like they were going to lose everything they invested. *We sacrificed everything to be with You – and now You're leaving us behind?!*

In this passage Jesus explains why they should not despair or be upset, but trust in the work of God and also of Jesus. Jesus was going home to God. He was going to His home in heaven with God, not just for Himself, but also for all His disciples. He comforts His disciples with this teaching: *I am going to heaven in order to take all of you there. Trust Me! Investing in Me guarantees a glorious future.*

1. When Jesus went away to heaven He went to His Father's House.

He began with these tremendous words: **Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.** Jesus places Himself on an equal footing with the heavenly Father! **I am going away. Where I am going you cannot follow now.** (13.36). But you need to trust in Me as you trust in Him! Trust what the Father and I are doing. We are working for your salvation. God and I are not leaving you stranded. God and I are achieving for you the goal of your salvation: heaven!

In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (2) *I am going away; I am not staying here. And when I go away, I go to my Father's house. That's where I'm going.*

- Other Bible verses speak of Jesus going to heaven. But here Jesus speaks of heaven as a house with many mansions or rooms. It is "My Father's house." This is where God dwells in absolute glory. Later Jesus said: **Glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.** (17.5)
- Yes, God is everywhere present, but He has chosen one place to be the Headquarters of His glory, power and love; to be the Headquarters of His communion, the very centre of His covenant dealings. He calls this place "My House." This is HOME for God, for Jesus, and for all the saints – in the power of the Spirit.

Different pictures are used in the Bible for this place: Mt. Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the holy city, the temple, the heavenly country, the Paradise or Garden of God. But here heaven where God dwells is called a house. It's a real place. It's not just a new state Jesus entered, but He has gone to a real place. **I go to prepare a place for you.**

What else did He say about His Father's house? It has many mansions: **In my Father's house are many mansions.** This translation comes from the old King James Version. In old English amansion did not mean a huge, magnificent palace up on a hilltop. It just meant a room or a lodging place or an apartment. [The NKJV has "rooms" in the mg.] But unfortunately we have come to think about heaven in a materialistic and individualistic way – of physical luxury and easy-living far better than you'll find in any tour of homes! And each one has his own private palace! Heaven is all about me and my privacy!!

But this is not what Jesus is teaching. **In my Father's house are many rooms** or **apartments**. That doesn't sound very glamorous, does it?!! Do you want to spend eternity in an apartment? Will that *really* be glory for me?? But this is how Jesus is teaching us to think about heaven in this passage – as the heavenly Father's house, which has many apartments or rooms in it. The point is not that God's children will spend eternity squished into tiny, uncomfortable apartments. The point is this: eternity will be spent right in the presence of God the Father. He has a room for His children in *His very own house*. He is not going to put you in some middle earth somewhere! He is not going to put you in a lonely place all by yourself in miserable privacy.

His disciples are on their way to the same place Jesus went: in the glorious presence of the Father, in His very own House, where you have direct access to Him who loves you so much that He sent His Son for you! This is God's covenant come to its absolute fullness and joy: as John later saw in the Revelation 21-22: God dwelling among His people. *He* is our new home!

There are many rooms in the Father's house. Room enough for all God's children. He is the God who makes room for all His children. This is real, and it is a place – but it is life in another dimension, so this house with many rooms is going to look far different than and be far better than a house with many rooms that we find here in our brick-and-mortar existence. For it is a house where City, temple, Garden, and Bride all come together. What that will be and what that will look like is far beyond our puny minds to grasp! Yes, that will be glory for me!

It's home. Here we are finally home. At home with God together with all the saints. *A home we will never have to leave, a home that will be everything we know a home should be, everything and much, much more than the best of our homes have ever been. Imagine: sitting down with your Father in that dining room to eat that food, and enjoy that conversation, and to know that it will only get more wonderful as time goes on. Never the shadow of death over that home!*

2. **Jesus ascended to His Father's house to prepare a place for us**

Jesus went to the Father's house not to get away from us – pesky people that we can be! – but to advance us, to open heaven's door for us. Hebrews 6:20 says that Jesus **entered heaven on our behalf as our forerunner** (6.20), to **appear for us** in God's presence!

This really is the whole point of our salvation, the whole point of the covenant made with Abraham, the whole reason Jesus came down from heaven to earth, and suffered and died on the cross: to bring God's children home (to His glory). We can summarize the whole project of salvation this way: God says to His Son, I want you to go down for my people whom I have chosen, to pay for their sin, to come under the curse for them, to redeem them and take them home. To Me. Back home to Me!

Sin got us expelled from the house. God shut the door and put a no entrance sign on it. God's Paradise is closed to rebels. We didn't want the glory and joy of the Father's house. We thought more and better was available if we listened to Satan!

- But in His great love for us God went to work to take that sign off the door, to open it up and take His children back in! He sent Jesus to take on Himself the crimes and punishment that got us shut out.
- And Jesus readily sacrificed Himself to do this work and accomplish this goal: to raise many sons and take them to glory. It's all about going home. Back to the Father's house. And Jesus leads the way by going home before us, and going home for us, to prepare a place for us, to make things ready for our home-coming.

So, Jesus said: **I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am you may be also.** That's His whole plan and goal for us. *Heaven is what Christianity is all about. Without heaven it is all to no purpose. The covenant, the incarnation, the cross, the resurrection, the gift of the Holy Spirit, it is all about how God brings us to heaven. Heaven stands at the end of it all as that to which everything points, from which everything gets its meaning.* (Rayburn)

I go to prepare a place for you. Wait, didn't Jesus say, once, that one Judgment day he will say: **Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the creation of the world?** Yes, it was prepared for us in eternity by God's planning it, but now it has to be prepared for us in reality! Not just the blueprint, but now the place!

But what needs to be prepared in heaven for us? Is there a problem with the rooms in the Father's house that they need to be prepared? I know it's true here on earth: when somebody moves into an apartment, lots of work needs to be done to prepare that place for the next tenants. Walls painted, holes fixed, improvements made. But God's house is perfect, isn't it? Is Jesus really busy fixing holes and painting walls in our rooms? Of course not!

Jesus is busy getting us ready for heaven – that's why He sent his Spirit down to earth to save us and sanctify us and keep the focus of our lives on heaven where Jesus is, not on earth! But's He's not busy getting heaven ready for us – not in the commonly understood notions of Jesus being busy, busy, busy getting our rooms ready.

No, what Jesus is saying is this: *just by my act of going there, I am preparing a place for you.* It is helpful to think of our modern practice of making reservations for someone at a hotel. You call the hotel in advance and make reservations for a room for someone. That room is now claimed. It has your name on it. It's yours by right! That's how Jesus by going to the Father's house has prepared a place for all His people. When He ascended He went not just for Himself, but as our High Priest, with all the names of all His children whom He purchased with His precious blood written on Him, and He, at the cost of that blood, reserved a room for all of His children. He claimed these rooms as our proper possession through His own blood!

And the Father who accepted the perfect payment of His Son on the cross said 'Yes' to every reservation. So the place has been prepared for you! That's why Scripture says that by faith in Jesus we are already now in heaven seated with Him in glory. Yes, He still must come back and get us, but our place is ready. It is ours. He has reclaimed the Father's house for us which we lost by our sin, and He regained by his death, resurrection and ascension!

So there is a place in heaven – an inheritance, a room – reserved in heaven for you. It is guaranteed! He has claimed it for us and will come again to take us there! My goal is to bring you here to be with Me in the presence of My Father.

3. **The Only Way there.**

Jesus added: **And where I go, you know, and the way you know.** (4) Here Jesus also teaches us the way to get there. Now, Thomas needed clarity, but He's already told them the place He's going and the way to get there in verses 1-3. Yet Thomas disagrees with Jesus: *No we don't now the place and so we can't know the way.* Thomas is thinking of the way as the bus you need to take to get to a destination. He's thinking of earthly things, not heavenly things.

Jesus answered his confusion with one of the most important statements we must know: **Jesus said: I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.** (6) Basically He's repeating 1-3 in new words: Didn't I tell you to believe in Me, that I am going to my Father's house and then coming back to get you? *Thomas, I am the way to the*

Father's house and eternal life and communion with Him. I am the bus who gets you there. I am the way. I am the truth – I have come to reveal the true God. I am the life – I am the one who brings you back to life with God which is life indeed.

And there's no other bus to take you to eternal life with God. Believing in Jesus guarantees us a place in the Father's house in eternal, joyful communion with Him together with all the saints. Not believing in Jesus guarantees you a place in hell where there's only weeping and gnashing of teeth. No matter what our culture says about there being many ways up the mountain to God's house, it is a lie. In Jesus God has opened up a door of fellowship with the living God. No other way agrees with God's character and will. No other way will get rid of your sin. There is no other way to be reconciled to God. Except through Jesus. There is no other way to go back home to the God who created us.

Nowadays people think everybody goes to heaven – unless you're extremely bad. And even then most likely you're bad because others made you do it, so really deep down you're good. The truth is: we're all extremely bad in God's eyes, by nature, and nobody, nobody is fit for heaven.

But if you believe in Jesus Christ, the one God's love sent to pay for sin and remove God's wrath, then you have found the only Way back to God. All your sins are washed away, and heaven's gates are open for you. Your room is reserved because you belong to Him, the sin-bearer, and He has gone there to prepare a place for you. He is interceding for you in heaven. He is protecting you and pulling you through every temptation and affliction. And when you die He will take your soul to heaven. And then one day he will come back and take you and all His chosen ones with Him into the joy and glory of heaven!

Conclusion

Are you living by faith in Jesus, the Son of God? In Jesus Christ your life has found its true Home. And that changes the way you live everyday! As the focus of your life in this earth is on the Father's house, that will make you a powerful witness in the midst of a world that has made this earth and its fleeting treasures and pleasures its focus.