

Exploring Life – part two
“Exploring Life after Death”
Pastor Dale Campfield – Eastgate Community Church
August 30th, 2009

Intro:

Matt 28:19 “Go and make disciples of all nations...”

ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration. To grow...which is expressed in our Connection Groups. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

Sermon Series Title: Exploring Life:
“To Boldly Go Where No Man Has Gone Before!”

Series Synopsis: We’ve reset our assumptions of Jesus Christ; climbed the mountain learning about the teaching of Jesus Christ; learned how to live life in the valley – now.... Let’s begin to explore life!

Life happens one season at a time; filled with individual events - positive and negative, known and unknown. In this six week series we shall boldly go where no man has gone before; to explore the good, the bad and the ugly as it pertains to each of our lives – in our quest to make an IMPACT for the Kingdom of God.

Last week we talked about...

Part One: “Exploring the Meaning of Life”

We talked about the purpose of our lives and what we are on this earth for. The answer is

Question - What is God's purpose/meaning for my life?

Answer - Life is preparation for eternity.

Today...

Part Two: “Exploring Life after Death”

Question: What will heaven and hell really be like?

People often talk about near death experiences where they find themselves in a dark tunnel approaching a marvelous light. Many medical experts will debunk and explain these near death experiences as mere neurological actions of the brain and body as its systems begin to shut down approaching death, then suddenly restarting a bit like rebooting a computer.



There are stories of men and women that have died and were on their way to Hell and somehow they were brought back to life and they were changed from that moment on.

They heard groans and horrible sounds of suffering. In the Bible there is a story of a man by the name of Lazarus

Luke 16:19-31 says, “19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,. 21And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried. 23And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeing Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime received thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou would send him to my father’s house: 28For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29Abraham saith unto him, they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30And he said, nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

This spoken by Jesus is not a parable for a parable does not give proper names as Abraham and Lazarus, both the “Rich Man” and Lazarus had died and their bodies had been buried, and what happened to them in the “Underworld,” was descriptive of what happened to them in their “disembodied state,” in that state they were conscious, could see, hear, speak, and recognized each other.

There are nine realities that will give you the full reality of Hell itself.

[Nine Realities of Hell](#)

Nine Realities of Hell

1. The Torment of Association with the Wicked Forever and Ever

Rev. 21:7-8

He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

All the vile people of this world will all have their part in this place. Satan, the Ant-Christ, Saddam, Hitler, Mussolini, Al Capone, Judas Iscariot, Harlots, Backbiters, Gossipers, Drunkards, Liars and the like. Yes, those that have fallen into this sinful category will not feel like they should be there with Satan, Anti-Christ and the like, because they were not that bad. Sin has all to do with this place. Who you associate with on this earth is who you will spend eternity with. All liars will have tier part in this place and those that associate with them.

2. The Torment of Eternal Hunger and Thirst

Luke 16:23-24

And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeing Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

The rich man knew Lazarus and Father Abraham; he also remembered his brothers, The Rich man for Lazarus to dip his finger in water and put it on his tongue for he was thirsty. Every lustful thought will never be filled, hunger and thirst will be the norm for eternity. Always hungry and thirsty but can never satisfy that need.

3. The Torment of Separation from Family

Luke 13:28

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the other Prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourself thrust out.

For those that made it to heaven I'm sure that God will wipe away their tears for the loved ones that did not make it to heaven. No more Christmas presents of pumpkin pie, no more family reunions or anniversaries.

4. The Torment of Eternal Darkness

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Hell is a place of mid-night darkness so black and thick that it can be felt! The darkness according to the Bible is almost indescribable.

2 Peter 2:4 *says that it is chains of darkness.*

Jude 13 *refers to the false Prophets and corrupt teachers, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.*

No moon or sun, no light of any kind. All you can do is hear the groans and moans of others. Hell is eternal night.

5. The Torment of Eternal Death

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This means separation from God, A spiritual death with no way out. Forgiveness is too late. This is something that God never meant to happen to you, that is why He gave Jesus His only Son to be the one to take away your sins, but you must believe in Him and Him alone.

Jesus took eternal death away from you for now. But if you die in your sins you will be lost forever. Listen when Jesus was on the cross He felt the separation from the Father. He did not cry for the pain when Jesus said, "my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" that was not because God had forsaken Him, but because God the Father cannot look upon sin. Jesus had taken the sins of the whole world. He cried out because the windows of heaven were closed.

Jesus said in Rev. 1:18, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; but I am alive forevermore. Amen, and I have the keys to death, hell and the grave. Because Jesus died you don't have too.

6. The Torment of Scorpion-Like Stings of Memory and Remorse

Living in the land of Regret! Forever Remembering the reason of why you are there, failing to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Daniel 12:2

Many of those whose bodies lie dead and buried will rise up, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace.

Those that ask shall receive the pardon of Christ and those that do not will receive eternal punishment for it. You will perpetually remember the things in this life that you did, all cheaters will remember the ones that they cheated, and Murders will be haunted by the ones that they murdered. All Liars will be haunted by their lies. Every criminal will be haunted by the deeds that they had done on this earth.

But, most of all, the ones that have sat in the pews of the churches and sang in the choir, been workers in the church, and filled the pulpits, they will be in the deepest of darkness and torment.

7. The Torment of Unsatisfied Lustful Cravings

In Hell nothing will satisfy the craving and the wants that you have.

Luke 16:24

And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

The craving for drugs and alcohol, pleasures of this world will not be filled.

You have heard of how alcoholics and drug addicts have killed to get a hit or how police officers have seen people get killed over a quarter.

Joel 1:5 says, “5 Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.” The sins that bind you here will haunt you there. It truly is a time to wake up and smell the fear of the wrath of Almighty God breathing down the back of your neck.

8. The Torment of Despair in Hell

Despair means to lose all hope of anything and to lose confidence and lose heart.

William Lane Craig said this; for if there’s no God, what’s so special about human beings? They’re just accidental by-products of nature which have evolved relatively recently on an infinitesimal speck of dust called Planet Earth, lost somewhere in a hostile and mindless universe, and which are doomed to perish individually and collectively in a relatively short time.—

A. W. Tozer said this; the average person in the world today, without faith and without God and without hope, is engaged in a desperate personal search throughout his lifetime. He does not really know where he has been. He does not really know what he is doing here and now. He does not know where he is going. The sad commentary is that he is doing it all on borrowed time and borrowed money and borrowed strength—and he already knows that in the end will he surely die.—

Joel 1:5

Awake, you drunkards, and weep; wail, all you drinkers of wine, because of the [fresh] sweet juice [of the grape], for it is cut off and removed from your mouth.

Gloom and despair go together.

9. The Torment of Unquenchable Flames

The Bible calls it a lake the Burns with fire.

Matthew 5:22 says, “22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Matt 25:41

Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, “Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.”

Mark 9:43-44 says, “43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

But there is a better plan! Now... finally, some good news!

You can know for sure that your name is written in the Lambs Book of Life.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

In answering our question for the day, "What will heaven and hell really be like?", we've addressed what hell will be like. Now, let's take a look at what heaven will be like. I don't know about you, but I'm excited about going to heaven! I know we have a lot of work to do here still, but the day is going to be awesome when we go there!

For me/for you/for us to make it through this life with a bounce in our step - we need something to keep us going... we need something to look forward to... we need what Peter calls in his first letter, "a living hope..." We need a hope that can never perish, spoil or fade away.

And friends it is possible for us to have this kind of hope...and when we do it is absolutely powerful; For you see the words; "REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS, I WILL SAY IT AGAIN. REJOICE!" were not written by a man whose life was going great, but rather by a man who was in prison, a man who had in his life been beaten, flogged, stoned and betrayed.

But Paul was not the first to use this power of a future hope to press on and endure in this life...

Hebrews 11:13,16

"All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised they only saw and welcomed them from a distance...they were longing for a better country - a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them..."

They were still living by faith - they didn't have the things promised - but they could see them in the distance and they knew that someday these promises would be theirs, they knew that someday they would hold them in their hands.

Today, if you are a Christian I want to give you something to look forward too. I want to give you a "before vacation" attitude about your life, I want to re-kindle a new the fires of your hope. And today if you are not a Christian I pray that the hope that those who are in Christ have will move you to accept Christ in order that you to may be born again into a living hope....

Brother's and sisters we are at this very moment Marching to Zion, beautiful beautiful Zion - we are marching upward to Zion the beautiful city of God. Do you believe that? Really believe that? This world is not our home we are just passing through.

We are headed home - we are going to heaven - and let me tell you heaven is going to be a blast! It's going to blow your mind. Float our boats and trip our triggers.

Let's look at the "Top Ten Reason Heaven is Going to be Great!"

“Top Ten Reason Heaven is Going to be Great!”

These are not in any particular order....

When we get to heaven...

1. WE'LL GET A NEW BODY

1 Cor 15:50-54 "DEAR FRIENDS, NOW WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD, AND WHAT WE WILL BE HAS NOT YET BE MADE KNOWN. BUT WE KNOW THAT WHEN HE APPEARS WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS..." 1 JOHN 3:3

2 COR 5:4

While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life.

In heaven we get a new body... And if we're honest we'd have to admit that living in this body is not so great. Our earthly body gets tired, feels pain, gets sick, and with age; moves slower, sags, our eyes dims, our ears dull, and things falls out (hair & teeth)...

And most People are not really happy with their body any way, billions are spent every year to cover up, make up, lift up and change the flaws in our bodies.

Well, in heaven we won't need to do that anymore because -- we get a new body, a better one, an eternal one; one that doesn't get tired, feel pain, get sick, sag or fall out... Getting a new body is one reason that heaven is going to be a great!

When we get to heaven...

2. WE'LL GET TO LIVE IN A CUSTOM BUILT HOUSE

JOHN 14:1-3

There is plenty of room for you in my Father's home. If that weren't so, would I have told you that I'm on my way to get a room ready for you? And if I'm on my way to get your room ready, I'll come back and get you so you can live where I live.

HEBREWS 11:10 *Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God.*

The "mold" house that we lived in prior to the house we are in now was horrible in every way possible! But now... We live in a dream house compared to that. But you know what; the house in heaven is beyond anything you could possibly imagine! The group Audio Adrenaline has a song called my father's house... In the song they begin by saying that they do not know what kind of house we live in... big or small/nice or rundown/whether we have a mom or dad -- but no matter what kind of "earthly" house we may have they try to encourage us by telling us about their father's house... It's a fun song... The chorus goes like this:

Come and go with me to my father's house It's a big big house - with lots and lots of rooms With big big tables with lots and lots of food....A big big yard were we can play football It's my father's house...

Living in a perfect house built by God is one reason why heaven is going to be a great! He has been working on it 2, 000 years - creation took just 6 days.

When we get to heaven...

3. WE'LL GET TO EAT GREAT FOOD

Who here likes to eat? A lot of people do, just check out the lines at Outback on a Friday or Saturday. People love to eat and they will wait hours to eat good food. Today after church, I can almost guarantee that Chipotle will be packed out – and probably Skyline too!

Now, I've been to some great buffet's... Well in heaven we get to eat and I know it's even going to be better than Taco Bell, Taco Time, or Taco Mamas! (in Washington state) How do I know we'll get to eat, the bible says so:

REV 19:9

Blessed are those invited to the Wedding Supper of the Lamb.

MT 8:11

I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

And we'll get to sit at the table with Abraham, Isaac and other bible characters... Can you just imagine saying to Abraham, "Hey Abraham could you pass me some more of that taco mix, and O' yeah I'll take a little more of that filet mignon..and certainly I have some of that coconut cream pie" I don't know about you but I'm looking forward to taking part in the best of all buffets. If getting a new body; living in a perfect home, and if eating great food appeals to you; then you'll find heaven to be a great!

4. WE'LL GET TO TALK WITH BIBLE CHARACTERS

For years we have heard of them, read about them and even imagined that we were them, and when we get to heaven we'll get to meet them....talk with them

We'll get to:

Ask David what it was like to fight Goliath....

Ask Noah what it was like living in the ark...

Ask Moses about parting the Red Sea...

And when can ask Daniel about the lion's den and Shadrac, Meshac and Abendego about the fiery furnace and Mary about being Jesus' mom..

Who are you looking forward to talking with?

Revelation 7:9

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.

And not only will we see and speak with bible characters we will also, which is the 5th reason why heaven is going to be a great...

When we get to heaven...

5. WE'LL GET TO SEE AND SPEAK WITH OUR LOVED ONES

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-17

The Master himself will give the command. Archangel thunder! God's trumpet blast! He'll come down from heaven and the dead in Christ will rise—they'll go first. Then the rest of us who are still alive at the time will be caught up with them into the clouds to meet the Master. Oh, we'll be walking on air! And then there will be one huge family reunion with the Master.

I am looking forward to being with my loved ones again, aren't you? Those who have gone on before me and those who are still with me... There is going to be a meeting in the air in the sweet sweet by and by.... How I love to see you over there in the land beyond the sky.

And we are just going to have a great time together - the best ever! I can't wait to see my daughter Cali and my grandparents and Aunt Annie. It's going to be wonderful!

6. WE'LL GET TO LIVE IN A PERFECT WORLD

Does living in this world ever get you down? Look at this...

Revelation 21

So he took me in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God and sparkled like a precious stone—like jasper as clear as crystal. The city wall was broad and high, with twelve gates guarded by twelve angels. And the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written on the gates.

The wall was made of jasper, and the city was pure gold, as clear as glass. The wall of the city was built on foundation stones inlaid with twelve precious stones: the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.

The twelve gates were made of pearls—each gate from a single pearl! And the main street was pure gold, as clear as glass.

I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light. The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the world will enter the city in all their glory. Its gates will never be closed at the end of day because there is no night there. And all the nations will bring their glory and honor into the city. Nothing evil will be allowed to enter, nor anyone who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty—but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Well, in Revelation 21 we read where John is given a vision of Heaven coming down from the sky... It is so incredible that mere words cannot describe it... but John tries to even though he is limited by the vocab that we have as humans.

John tells us that the heavenly city is surrounded by high protective walls the foundations of which are made of precious stones. He says that the city is made of pure transparent Gold and jasper. That the 12 gates symbolic of the city's access and openness are constructed of 12 large pearls.

He says that in this city there is no need for a temple, for God and His son are there. It also has no need for the sun, for God's glory and Jesus provide all the illumination that is needed.

And there's no more night or darkness. And through the city flows the river of life, it is as clear as crystal, its source coming from the very throne of God. And along its banks grows the tree of life, yielding 12 different monthly fruits.

It will be a perfect place to live - creation which has suffered because of the fall will be restored and for mankind

Paradise will be regained! All that was lost to man in his first home, lost because of sin, will be returned to him 100 fold in his final home. Heaven is going to be an incredible - a perfect world; the world you've always dreamed of.

When we get to heaven...

7. WE'LL GET TO HAVE THE "NO MORES"

When you and I get to heaven there is going to be some awesome "no-mores", and these "no-mores" should really inspire us, they should rally keep us going and give us a living hope.

REV 7:16

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat...

NO MORE: hunger, thirst, scorching heat, tears, death, crying pain. bad guys , impure things

Now those are some awesome no-mores...

Think of the things that really get you down in life - chances they are also a no more....

The 8th reason heaven is going to be great is because...

8. WE'LL NEVER FALL AGAIN

I will be the last time we fall.

Romans 7:15 – 20

I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. ... I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.

Do you ever feel like Paul? I sure do. I too find myself doing the things I don't want to do. And not doing the things that I want to do. Sometimes like a song by DC Talk called "In the Light," sometimes I despise my own behavior. Sometimes I'm just so tired of letting my God down, of Giving in and falling down to sin.

Yes, I know that I'm saved by grace (thank God) and yes I know that his blood can and does wash away every stain, nevertheless I still get tired of failing, of falling. Do you? This struggle is one more reason why heaven is going to be a great to me - For you see in heaven - I will fall for the last time...

And it will not be a fall of failure or into sin - because I'll never do that again. No, I'll never feel the pain of letting God down again. For the last time I fall, and the last you will fall, will be when we fall to our knees to worship at the feet of our God....

Which leads us to the final 2 reasons why heaven is going to be a great!

9. WE'LL EXPERIENCE THE BEST WORSHIP SERVICE EVER!

REVELATION 5:11-12

Then I looked again, and I heard the voices of thousands and millions of angels around the throne and of the living beings and the elders.¹² And they sang in a mighty chorus: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered—to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing."

REVELATION 7:9-12, 19:1-8

Now I love great worship - I love enthusiastic worship - I love worship full of energy, excitement, smiling faces, lifted hearts and hands...Pastor Gerson does a great job in leading our Sunday morning celebration worship service. I've been to a lot of great worship experiences in my lifetime. But just wait!

I look forward to worshipping in heaven - because it's going to be out of this world... WHAT A DAY OF REJOICING THAT WILL BE... It's going to blow my mind - and it's going to lift the roof and rock the walls of heaven. And... it's never going to stop! And some of the greatest vocalists of all time will be there! Who knows, there may be a section in heaven in country style – rock style – hip hop style - ??? But in reality, it will be something we've never heard before. Bring it on!

The last reason heaven is going to be great is because in heaven...

10. WE'LL GET TO SEE GOD.... (THE FATHER, SON, SPIRIT)

1 JOHN 3:2

But friends, that's exactly who we are: children of God. And that's only the beginning. Who knows how we'll end up! What we know is that when Christ is openly revealed, we'll see him—and in seeing him, become like him.

JOHN 14:3

"AND IF I GO AND PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU, I WILL COME BACK AND TAKE YOU TO BE WITH ME THAT YOU ALSO MAY BE WHERE I AM..."

Conclusion:

I can't wait, how about you! But take note of this...

There is one thing that is better than heaven and worse than hell.

The one thing that is worse than hell....

Is going there and taking someone with you.

The one thing that is better than heaven...

Is going there and taking someone with you.

Rev. 21:27

Nothing evil will be allowed to enter, nor anyone who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty—but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Amos 4:12

Prepare to meet thy God.

CHALLENGE: Who do you know who needs Jesus?

It's time for us to let them know who Jesus is..... so they too can experience eternity with Christ in Heaven!

And as we do...

You watch... You wait... You'll See!