

Future Holdings

It's reached the point where I'm almost afraid to open the newspaper. Week after week, the headlines seem to stay the same. "Worst in History." "Plummeting Further." "No Hope on the Horizon." And those are just about the Astros' bullpen.

The current financial crisis has consumed America. It's all the talk shows talk about. It's the leading story on almost every newscast. It's the new conversation-starter for strangers standing in line. If anything, it has revealed that we are one nation under the influence of the almighty dollar.

Where does the Christian fit in all of this? What should our attitude be? First of all, it is not materialistic to be concerned about our jobs and income. We have mortgages to pay, too. We have children to feed and financial obligations to meet just like everyone else. Paul told Timothy that if anyone "does not provide for his own, especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5:8). Nothing covetous about that.

But through it all, the children of God ought to have a higher perspective in crisis, even the economic kind. We endure such with the understanding that this world is not our final resting place. We know that in comparison to eternity, we are here but for a short time. Whether our stocks are up or down, whether our financial future is bright or bleak, we can sing, "earth holds no treasures but perish with using, however precious they be; yet there's a country to which I am going, heaven holds all to me."

What is it about heaven that ought to hold everything to us?

Heaven is the home of our Father. One of the final visions given to John in the book of Revelation is a picture of what is waiting for man once this life is over. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them" (Rev. 21:3). This will not be like a business environment where the president or CEO makes a surprise visit on occasion to make certain everything is working properly. God Himself will be among His people, just like He wanted in the beginning. No longer will our sins cause Him to hide His appearance from us. We will "see his face" (Rev. 22:4).

There are a lot of reasons I want to go to heaven. I have a growing list of questions I would like to ask. I have a number of reunions I am anxious to attend. But what makes heaven hold all to me is that it is the dwelling place of my Lord and my God. I want to see Him. There is no greater face value.

Heaven is our restoration to a perfect place. "And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning or crying or pain; the first things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4). That what's the Garden of Eden looked like in the beginning. That is a picture of our world before sin

corrupted it. Since then, even the creation itself groans under the curse. But in the new heaven and the new earth, all of the things that make life under the sun so unbearable at times will be no more.

Can you imagine an environment where you never have to hear the word cancer again? Where a parent is never forced to attend the funeral of their child? Where a husband never has to watch his wife suffer from Alzheimer's? That's where we're going, to a world where death itself will pass away. Whatever hardship is mine at this moment, this too shall pass. For "joy without measure will be my treasure."

Heaven is the crown for our victory. "He who overcomes will inherit these things" (Rev. 21:7). That was first promised to First Century Christians who were facing persecution and violent death for their faith. The assurance from God Himself was that their perseverance and devotion would be rewarded with an eternal home, one that far outweighed any earthly prize gained by giving up. In short, they were instructed, "be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

In a financial downturn, our eyes are drawn to phrases like "FDIC insured" or "will not lose value." We need look no further than to Peter's description of our everlasting inheritance: "imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:4). Whatever might be taken away from us in future days, nothing can diminish the security of our hope, anchored in the promises of a God who cannot lie. My crown is waiting. I will not be overcome.

What does the future hold? As far as earthly wealth, even the experts are not certain. As for the heavenly kind, it depends on where you're laying up your treasure.

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