

Three People You'll Meet In Heaven

On Sunday, we completed our sermon series on "How To Neighbor" by looking at Jesus' words in Matthew 25 about how we will be judged in the age to come.

1. Warm up question: Who's someone you've never known here on earth that you'll be anxious to meet in heaven?
2. In his book "Weight of Glory," C.S. Lewis said, "There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. [The most ordinary] person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to [grow closer or further from our eternal destiny]. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics." What thoughts or feelings does this quote evoke in you?
3. II Corinthians 4:17 says, "This slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure." What do you think that verse means? How would you put it in your own words?
4. Every encounter we have with another human gives us the opportunity to help shape their eternal soul, for better or worse. That's why how we interact with people is so important. Read Matthew 25:31-40.
 - a. On what basis are people judged in this passage?
 - b. What does verse 40 mean? How would you put it in your own words?
 - c. When you read this passage, how does it make you feel?
5. Jeff asked us to imagine what it will be like when we stand before God. In particular, he asked us to imagine God saying, "Three people from your life will be randomly selected, and how you responded to them will determine the measure of your life." He then asked us to imagine that the three people selected are: a spiritual Seeker, a Stranger, and an Enemy. First, let's consider how we respond to spiritual Seekers.
 - a. Read Acts 1:8. Do you feel Jesus expects you to share your faith?
 - b. Cardinal Emmanuel Suhard said, "To be a witness does not consist in propaganda, nor even in stirring people up, but in being a living mystery. It means to live in such a way that one's life would not make sense if God did not exist." What do you think of Suhard's quote? Who's someone you know that's living this way?
 - c. Jeff defined a "spiritual seeker" as someone who's spiritually hungry and thirsty, who senses that there must be more to life than eating, drinking, sleeping, and

punching the time clock, but has not yet found answers and settled on a spiritual path.” Who do you know that fits that description? What might it look like for you to share your faith with that person?

- d. Jeff suggested that sharing our faith can often be as simple as saying to someone facing hardship, “I’ll pray for you.” Do you ever do that with people who aren’t already part of your church family? Why or why not?
 - e. Sharing our faith can also be as simple as inviting someone to church. Is there someone God is laying on your heart that might need an invite to church?
 - f. Who’s someone who’s been a powerful positive influence in shaping your spiritual life? How will you feel about that person throughout eternity?
6. The second person we talked about on Sunday was the random Stranger we encounter. Jeff shared the story of a couple (Roger and Judy) who secretly bought pork chops to help a poor elderly couple celebrate their wedding anniversary.
- a. When in your life has a stranger done something that really blessed you? How did that make you feel? How will you feel about that person throughout eternity?
 - b. Read Hebrews 13:2. What do you think this verse means? Why is it so important that we show kindness to strangers?
 - c. Tell us about a time recently when you showed kindness to a stranger – or had an opportunity, but failed to seize the moment.
7. The third person we talked about on Sunday was an Enemy. Jesus makes clear that our “neighbor” includes our Enemy, and that he expects us to love them.
- a. Read Matthew 5:43-48. Tell us about someone who is (or has been) an Enemy in your life. What’s the current state of things?
 - b. Suppose the enmity between you and your Enemy is not resolved here on earth. How might that affect the celestial beauty you carry (or don’t carry) with you into eternity? How might it affect the celestial beauty of your Enemy? How will you feel when you cross paths with that person in heaven?
 - c. Jeff told how John Adams and Thomas Jefferson managed to become friends after a long period of enmity. What might be the next step Jesus wants you to take with respect to your Enemy?
 - d. Does it seem fair that so much of our life will be judged on how we respond to the people around us? If you were God would you use that standard?

*New sermon series starts this Sunday: **Ghost Stories***