



The Forever You | Ryan Wekenman | 2.5.23

Weekly Study

S H A R E

This week, Ryan finished our current “The Future You” series with a message about Heaven. If you are new, this series has been about the future you and the gap between where you are today and where you believe God wants you to be as you move forward confidently. At Red Rocks Church we exist to make heaven more crowded and that means we believe we get to live for eternity. We have to talk about the forever you if that is the case — as Ryan said, if we can get vivid vision for who we are going to be for all of eternity, we believe that vision will pull the current us forward into more of who God wants us to be. It can be difficult to keep your eyes focused on a place you’ve never been — like you’re swimming through fog and don’t exactly know where you’re going. When we don’t have a picture of the forever us, we’ll be tempted to slow down or stop instead of running the race that God has marked out for us with perseverance. With that vision in mind, we will be able to humbly pursue something as mysterious as eternity and set our eyes on the eternal hope that is to come in the midst of the realities of daily life.

G R O W

Read Revelation 21:3-5.

There is coming a day when God is going to dwell with us as his people forever, in the new heavens and new earth where He has established his reign. This is the culmination of the story. He’s always wanted to dwell with us! Wherever Jesus went during his time on earth, it was like a walking wedding celebration. Heaven was touching earth. In Revelation 21 we see the culmination of this. We will all be so keenly aware that Jesus is king and that God is for us in new earth.

There are moments on this side of eternity where heaven feels close, but there is coming a day where we will experience those moments in their fullness. Even the best moments on this side of eternity can be interlaced with pain and longing, but verse 3 paints the picture where we get to worship together with no comparison, overthinking, pain or heartbreak or striving — because we realize that God is our God and we are his people.

He is going to wipe every tear from our eyes. Death isn't the end of the story. The Lord is your shepherd. He is protecting you. Even though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you don't have to be afraid because your Good Shepherd is walking every step of the way, and as his people, we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Life is too hard to not make Jesus king. In the face of tragedy you realize how much you need a Savior and how beautiful Jesus really is. The world may be broken right now, but He is making everything new.

- **What has been your understanding of heaven until now? How did this message change that perception?**
- **What moments in your life give you a glimpse of heaven on earth?**

MOVE

Read Revelation 21:1-2.

We know that verse 1 paints a picture of an event that is going to happen in the future. Nobody knows when this is going to happen, but we are promised in Scripture that a new heaven and a new earth is coming. Ryan explained more of the theology of heaven to us which helped demonstrate heaven as an intermediate place — the place where we go when we die — but not our final destination, which is the new heavens and new earth that God will establish in the future, which is going to. We talked about heaven as an intermediate place and then the new heavens and the new earth - which will be in the future.

In light of knowing that there is a new earth coming and that it's going to feel more familiar than we can realize right now, what do we do? We learned that our eternal state is an embodied one: we will not be 'floating orbs' sentenced to an eternal worship service; rather, we look at Jesus as our example. He walked out of the tomb on the third day in a resurrected body. He had conversations with his disciples and invited them to have breakfast with him on the beach. He let those who doubted touch his hands that

were still wounded. In the same way, the eternal state that we have to look forward to is us, being humans again, except the earth is renewed and restored.

How do we contribute toward the end of the story? Human beings are on the earth to cultivate it and take it somewhere good. That means that your work matters and that you were made for it! Deep down, we know that work is actually good because occasionally, you have moments where you feel like you're firing on all cylinders: the product that you're creating got completed, the sale went through, you won the case, the surgery went well. Right now work is under the curse, so that means those days are few and far between. On new earth, imagine work, but it's always the really good moments filled with progress and it doesn't feel like toil. You were created for work. You have good deeds he's set out for you to do. We'll still be serving God on new earth. You have the rest of eternity to fulfill those God sized dreams he's put in your heart and take the world somewhere. That's what the Bible has to say about the forever you.

- **Are you surprised to learn that heaven isn't our final destination, and that it's actually going to be more familiar than you think?**
- **What moments in your work do you feel most alive?**
- **What God-sized dreams do you have that you want to pursue during your life? What is one step you can take in 2023 to move toward that dream?**

P R A Y

Take time to pray together asking God to set your eyes on the end of the story, no matter what happens. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you everything you need to persevere as you move from season to season and run your race well. Ask Him to give you God-sized dreams and the courage to pursue them with Him wholeheartedly.