

How To Be Sure of Eternity in Heaven

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Host: David Wheaton 00:08

How to be assured of eternity in heaven. That is the topic we'll discuss today right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a nonprofit listener supported radio ministry. We are able to broadcast on the radio station, website or app on which you are listening today because of the support of listeners like you. Thank you for your prayer, your encouragement and support. You can connect with us by visiting our website, TheChristianWorldview.org, calling our toll free number 1-888-646-2233 or by writing to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Hope in Scripture can be defined as the believers assurance that the blessings God promises for the future will occur. It's a joyful expectation of an unrealized future reality. Now, the greatest most joy producing promise that God has made is that his Son, Jesus Christ, is going to return to Earth someday to bring His followers to heaven for eternity. I Thessalonians 4:16-17 says, *"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ [believers] will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain [living believers] will be caught up together with them [the dead in Christ] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord."*

Whether you believe that passage describes the rapture of church-age believers or simply the second coming of Christ to resurrect believers to rule and reign with him, the result is the same- Christ will raise the earthly bodies of believers [whether they're dead believers or still living believers], transform the perishable bodies into imperishable bodies, reuniting the soul and spirit with a new imperishable body to spend eternity in heaven. That's the promise.

So why is this the greatest hope? Because eternity in the presence of God is the greatest blessing, especially in light of the alternative-unending torment in the lake of fire. Listen to how Jesus describes the eternity of hell. He says in Mark chapter nine: *If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.* There is no more poignant, rubber-meets-the-road test of what you believe, what your expectant hope is for the future, than when a loved one dies or when you are facing death yourself.

Where are you going after you die? How can one have assurance of going to heaven, rather than doubt, or having dread of going to hell? How can one have faith in a realm that we can't see or touch? So I thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview as we discuss the trustworthy God, who will keep his greatest promise of heaven.

Now, as many of you know, our wonderful father, my mother's beloved husband died unexpectedly earlier this month, and I put a post on Facebook, I'm not going to read all of the post, but just a portion of it, where I said this. There has been much grieving over losing our beloved patriarch, but the grief has been outweighed by our full assurance that dad is now in Heaven with the Lord he so faithfully served. In fact, we rejoice for dad. God promises over and over in His Word that the believer in Jesus Christ is given eternal life in heaven. For the Christian, when the perishable body dies, the imperishable soul and spirit goes directly to heaven, awaiting Christ's return to resurrect the perishable body and transform it into an imperishable body.

Here are just a few passages from scripture that provide the basis for this. First, from John Chapter 11 when Jesus said to Martha, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."* And then he says, "Do you believe this?" And Martha replies, *"Yes, Lord; I have believed that you are the Christ, the Son of God, even he who comes into the world."* That's from John chapter 11. Or how about the well known verse in John, chapter three, verse sixteen? *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.* Or John 3:36. *He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.* Or how about First Thessalonians chapter four? *But we do not want you to be uninformed, [Paul writes to the Thessalonian believers] about those who are asleep, [those who have died] so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope about what happens after death.* For if we believe that Jesus died [Or died in Jesus]. The repeated promise is this. God gifts eternal life and heaven to all who believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. Just one more paragraph I'll read.

My dad believed in the sinless life, the substitutionary death, and the supernatural resurrection of Jesus Christ as the one and only way for him to be forgiven of his sin and reconciled to God. And this is why we are certain that dad is in the presence of the Christ he believed in and followed to the end.

There's more to the post, and you can read it at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. Or you can go to The Christian Worldview FaceBook page or my personal Facebook page as well. So the question is, how can we be certain that the believer is in the presence of Christ when he or she dies?

And before we answer that, let's consider another question. Have you ever thought about what is the worst thing that could possibly happen to you? Some people might answer;

- Well, it would be getting a cancer diagnosis and going through the process of chemotherapy, radiation surgery and having that carry on for years on end, just a horrible diagnosis and prognosis.
- Maybe getting in an accident and becoming disabled and a quadriplegic.
- Someone else might answer; The worst thing that could happen would be to be divorced after being married for 25 or 30 years and having my life completely unraveled because our family was broken

up.

- Another person might answer that the worst thing that could happen would be estrangement from one of my children, the child that I loved and raised and did everything for, and then have that child not even want to be with me or speak to me.
- Going bankrupt, losing all my money, having nothing, and I'm 50 or 60 years old and have no idea what's going to happen to me in the future and no one to take care of me. And now I'm destitute.
- Another person might say; The worst thing that could happen would be that I'd be imprisoned. I will be taken away from my family or those I loved and lose my freedom.
- And finally, one might say; Well, the worst thing that can happen is that you die or a loved one dies or my beloved child dies, That will be absolutely the worst thing that could possibly happen in life.

Now you'll notice that all of those potential answers involve one thing. Loss. Cancer or disability involves the loss of a person's health or mobility. A divorce involves the loss of a marriage, estrangement from a child involves the loss of a relationship, family relationship. Going bankrupt involves the loss of money and security in this life. Imprisonment or kidnapping involves the loss of your personal freedom to move around to do what you'd like to do. And death itself, the death of a loved one or the death of a child, that involves the loss of a life and a relationship and that's probably the most painful of all. But, I would posit that there's something much worse than all of those things. And that is the loss of one's soul to hell. That is the worst possible thing that could happen to someone. Listen to how Jesus describes this in Mark chapter eight. Jesus says, *For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit or lose his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*

Just think about that for a second. In other words, Jesus is saying, If you gained everything in the world, all the money and relationships, and health and success, and popularity, everything a person could possibly want in this world, and no one's ever gained that by the way, no one's ever gained the whole world, it still wouldn't be worth losing your soul or going to hell. That's a pretty amazing statement. That's how valuable your soul is. It's much more valuable than gaining the entire world if you could even do so. Now, the reason Jesus said that is because losing your soul to hell in final judgment by God, is abhorrent, terrifying to even consider.

Matter of fact, the Bible ends toward the latter part of the book of Revelation, talking about the judgment of God on unbelievers and those who have rejected his offer of reconciliation through Christ. Listen to Revelation chapter 20 starting in verse 11. The apostle John writes, *Then I saw a great white throne and him [God] who sat upon it. From whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the*

sea gave up the dead which were in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them, and they were judged, each one of them according to their deeds.

In other words, their sins were all recorded in the books. The fact that they had rejected God's offer of Christ to forgive them and reconcile them and save them was all recorded in the books. Then it says this in verse 14 of Revelation 20. *Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.* This is the second death, [the first death is your physical death] the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, [the book that God holds that has the names of those who have believed in him] he was thrown into the lake of fire. This is not a metaphor. This is not hyperbolic. Not an exaggeration. It's not just scare tactics. This is what the Bible teaches, over and over and over again, throughout the pages of Scripture. You have to reject God's Word, to reject the literal place of hell, because it's all over scripture. In Matthew 10:28 Jesus says, *"Do not fear those who kill the body [the physical body] but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him [God] who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."* Another passage on this that is just most vivid is Jesus account of the rich man and Lazarus.

I hope you stay tuned because we will read that passage and what it teaches after this break on The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton.

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Host: David Wheaton

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, [The ChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org) where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry.

Our topic today is how to be sure of eternity in heaven. And before the break we were just about to read the passage in Luke chapter 16 about the rich man and Lazarus which teaches so much on the reality of Heaven and Hell in a most vivid way. Now, some people say this is a parable. Some people say it's an actual story. Either way, you can't miss the message here. Jesus tells us in Luke chapter 16, *Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking the poor man's sores.*

Verse 22. Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. [Abraham's bosom is another word for heaven]. Verse 23 In Hades [this is the place of the unbelieving dead before final judgment in the lake of fire] the rich man lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and he saw Abraham [again that represents heaven, because Abraham again believed God and was recommended to him for righteousness. Abraham is representative of the Father of all who would believe] far away [so there's a long distance between the rich man and Abraham] and Lazarus in his bosom. [He saw Lazarus, the poor man, with Abraham in heaven]. And the rich man cried out and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.

Verse 25. But Abraham said, Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now Lazarus is being comforted here, [in heaven] and you are in agony. [In Hades] And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us. And then the rich man said, Then I beg you, father, [Abraham] that you send him [Lazarus] to my father's house--for I have five brothers-- in order that Lazarus may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."

So just get the picture here. There's a chasm you can't cross from one side to the other. It's fixed for eternity. Where the rich man is it's hot. He's in torment. He just wants a drop of water on his tongue for he says, "I am in agony in this flame." But Abraham says, "No, you can't cross over now, it's too late." So finally, the rich man just begs him, Well, if I'm here, and I can't get out of here, please just go tell my brothers. He wants to tell his brothers so they don't come to the same place and have to go

into torment. Apparently, this isn't a place where there's a party, as a lot of people think, where we can get together and socialize. The rich man realizes that. There is no point in having his brothers come there, and to join him in his misery. He wants to go warn them, don't come to this place. But Abraham said, [in verse 29] *"They have [your brothers have] Moses and the Prophets; let them [your brothers] hear them. But the rich man said, No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!"*

In other words, the law, the Old Testament, and the prophets, which of course predict Christ's coming, talk about the holiness of God, that's not enough for them the rich man says. But if someone goes to them from the dead, if Lazarus comes back and enters the world, they will repent, they'll turn from their sin if they see this miracle. But then Abraham says in the last verse here, verse 31, *"If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead."* If Lazarus comes back to life and tells them. And that really shows the hardened unbelief of the human heart that won't believe in the truth of Scripture in the Old Testament with the law and the Prophets. That not even someone rising from the dead would be enough to soften the heart of the unrepentant.

So you're here, you have two men, a rich man and the poor man, you have two completely different lives, and apparently two different beliefs about God, and then two polar opposite destinations. The implication here is that a belief or a decision made during their earthly life. The rich man lived in luxury, he did not believe in God, he rebelled against God, and he ended up in hell, whereas Lazarus apparently had a terrible life on Earth, but he did believe in God, and that God could save him from his sin. So their destination was not a result of the rich man was wealthy and the poor man had nothing, so therefore that's the criteria for going to heaven or hell. The rich man is like the person we just read about that gained the whole world but lost his soul. The poor man had nothing and he gained his soul, he gained priceless riches in heaven. The rich man lived for himself and didn't repent of his sin and trust in what God said about His Son. The poor man apparently believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. That's why he ended up with Abraham, who had done the same thing.

The bottom line of the bottom line of life is, more than anything else it's, where are you going to spend your eternity after you die? Because there is life after death. And the Bible says it is appointed unto man once to die. We all die once physically. There have only been two people in history who haven't died physically and gone to heaven. That was Elijah and Enoch in the Old Testament. Even Jesus died once physically, before he was resurrected and ascended into heaven.

Your soul inside of you is eternal, your body is temporal. Once your soul is created in the womb, by God, your soul will live forever, and be reunited with an imperishable body someday, a body that God will prepare either for heaven or for hell.

So the key most important question is, What must one do to go to heaven, rather than hell? Well, to answer that question, Scripture is not unclear about that question. It answers that question over and

over, it is the most important question in life. How can I, as a sinful man be forgiven by God and be welcomed into heaven, rather than being judged and thrown into hell? That is the question that each of us needs to consider and answer the correct way, the biblical way.

We already read a few passages that give the answer. Notice the common word in these passages. When Jesus said to Martha, *"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this, Martha?"* She said to Him, *"Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world."* That's from John 11. Or how about John 3:16. We already read this. *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."* You read John 3:36. *He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey or believe the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."* This is so clear. Romans 10: 9-10 says, *If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.*

To answer the question, the Bible is so clear on this. We can be saved from hell and be welcomed into heaven, according to Jesus and all of Scripture, by believing God, by believing what God said specifically about his Son, Jesus Christ, that His sinless life, His sacrificial substitutionary death on the cross for our sin, and His supernatural resurrection from the grave, that atoned for, or satisfied God's wrath and justice, deserved wrath and justice over our sin, by trusting in Jesus work on our behalf, not trusting in our own works, because they cannot contribute to our salvation, they cannot atone for our sin, that's how you can be saved from God's wrath and be welcomed into heaven when you physically die.

First Corinthians 15 is one of the most important chapters in the Bible because it addresses the greatest, most joy producing promise of God and how you can receive it. Corinth, the town of Corinth, is in modern day Greece, somewhat close to Athens. It was the Las Vegas of its day. It was known as Sin City. The apostle Paul wasn't scared off by Sin City though, and he actually established a church there on his second missionary journey. He obviously believed the power of God and the message of the gospel, that some could be rescued out of this very dark, sinful place. But not surprisingly, with the most ungodly of culture surrounding this little church in Corinth, serious problems arose in the church in a fairly short amount of time. Instead of pursuing holiness, the people in the church of Corinth had become marked by worldliness and ungodliness. People in the church were tolerating openly sinful behavior that even the world around them wouldn't tolerate. There was a man in this church, who was incestually involved with his stepmother. The Corinthian church wasn't doing anything about it. There were also divisions and factions in the church. Some of the members claimed to be followers of various teachers like Apollo's or Paul or Peter or Christ. This church was a mess.

Paul wrote his sixteen chapter letter to correct them and ground them in sound doctrine so things could be set back in order. So for the first 14 chapters, Paul reproves them and instructs them how to correct their way. Then in chapter 15 and 16, but mainly here, in chapter 15, he concludes his letter to

them by reminding them of the most important thing, the Gospel above all else. The Gospel must be correctly understood and believed, for it is the foundation of one's salvation, and also the foundation of the most blessed promise of Christ's resurrection. Thus the believers resurrection, to live for eternity in heaven. And in this chapter, there are just two things that Paul calls the Corinthians to trust in, to believe in, that provides this hope again. A hope that's an expectant assurance of what God has promised.

The first point is this. The first thing to trust in is to trust what God has revealed about His Son and thus be saved. Paul writes in I Corinthians 15, *Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.* Now onto verse three. He's going to explain what that gospel is, the gospel that you are saved by, if you believe it, if you truthfully believe it, and don't just believe in vain. Verse three. *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, [Paul had received this truth from God and he's now sharing it with the Corinthians] that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to see Cephas, [or Peter] then to the twelve. After that he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; [or died] then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, Christ appeared to me also.*

What Paul is saying here is that here's the gospel that Christ died, he was buried, and He was raised on the third day, according to what Scripture said. And not only that, there's evidence to this he appeared to all these different people, in fact, 500 Brethren at one time. He doesn't just tell them what to believe. He said, Here's the evidence for why you should believe this. Now to believe is a test of faith. Faith is God's test for us. Will we believe God at His Word? Will we believe that Christ lived and died, was buried, and rose again and ascended into heaven? That's what we're called to believe. When we believe that, God reckons it to us as righteousness. Faith is simply believing God at His Word.

You've probably heard the opening verses to Hebrews chapter 11. The quote, "Hall of faith chapter." It starts out like this. *Now faith is the assurance [there's that word] of things hoped for, [expected, promised, assured by God] the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval.* Skipping to verse six. *For without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is God, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.* So we believe in Christ to be saved by faith, what God has revealed. This is a trustworthy God with a trustworthy Word, trustworthy witnesses. That's how you are saved. If you believe God at His Word and what He has revealed about his Son, Jesus Christ. That's the first point here. When you trust what God has revealed about His Son and are saved, that is the gateway, that is the the door opening for you to have eternal life in heaven. That is the all important first step. Then after that, point two, it's about trusting what God has revealed about Christ's resurrection, as guaranteeing that you the believer will be resurrected as well.

We need to take a brief break for some ministry announcements. When we return, we'll get into the second point about how to be sure of eternity in heaven. I'm David Wheaton and you are listening to The Christian Worldview.

Featured Resource: *My Boy, Ben*

For a limited time, we are offering *My Boy, Ben* for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. The book is the true story of a Yellow Lab that I had back when I was competing in the professional tennis tour. It's about relationships with Ben, my parents, with a childhood friend I would eventually marry, but ultimately with God who causes all things, even the hard things to work together for good.

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Host: David Wheaton

Thanks for joining us today on The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton, the host. Just a reminder that today's program and past programs are archived at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. Transcripts and Short Takes are also available.

Our topic today is how to be sure of spending eternity in heaven. Once you believe by faith that Jesus Christ is who we claimed to be, and he's your Savior and Lord, you're saved, you have the Holy Spirit. Now the next step is you trust what God has revealed about his son's resurrection, because his resurrection is going to guarantee that you will be resurrected as well after you die. So let's move on in I Corinthians 15:12 now that we know what the gospel is. The Gospel must be believed. Here's

what we should believe, once we believe the gospel. *Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, [which he has] how do some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.* Paul is actually setting up a self defeating argument. In other words, if there is no resurrection, then Christ hasn't been resurrected, then you won't be resurrected and we're fools. Listen to what he says. *Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses are [liars] of God because we testified [or have been testifying] against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.*

That's right. Paul stakes all of Christianity on the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If Christ did not rise from the dead, we are most to be pitied. We are believing a lie. You might as well just go home now. The believers eternal place in heaven, that promise, is based on the fact of Christ's resurrection. To say that the believer does not go to heaven, is not resurrected to go to heaven, is to call Christ a fraud and a liar, and that he didn't rise from the dead.

And I am certainly not prepared to do that. He goes on to verse 20, keeps building on this argument, he says this. *But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. In other words, Christ was the first one, He's the first one of all believers who will rise from the dead. First, since by a man, Adam, came death, by a man, Christ, also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ, the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when he is abolished all rule and all authority and power, for He must reign until he has put all his enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death.*

What this means is that all of us are going to die. It's just a matter of when. Adam's sin and our sin has brought death to us all. But here's the good news. Since God raised Christ from the dead, God will also raise all believers from the dead and bring them to heaven. The fact of Christ's resurrection guarantees the fact of believers resurrection to heaven. Then Paul goes on to explain the specifics of how that actually is going to happen. This is what is incredible about Scripture. It doesn't just give you a couple things to kind of hope in, it gives you the specifics of how this will actually take place. Verse 35 of I Corinthians 15. *But someone will say, "How are the dead raised?" It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written, The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL. The last Adam, became a life -giving spirit. However, the spiritual [that Christ gives] is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.*

So in other words, the physical body lives and then it dies. Believers, when Christ returns, receive a spiritual body, just like the body of Christ after he was raised, that will be imperishable, rejoined with the soul and spirit and be ready for eternity, both in heaven now and when heavens destroyed and when there's a creation of the new heavens and new earth, a body that can be fit for that for eternity.

Then he concludes this incredible chapter. I encourage you to read it on your own. I Corinthians 15. Now in verse 50. *Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.* In other words, you can't go to heaven with the body you have now. Verse 51. *Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, [dead believers will be raised to an imperishable, eternal body] and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then we'll come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The point here is that death seems like it wins over all of us, it seems like you die and your body gets put in the ground and returns to dust. But Paul is saying, "No!" There is certainty of victory over death for all believers. So to summarize here, the physical body dies of the believer. The soul and spirit of that believer goes directly into heaven, into the presence of God and someday Christ will return and resurrect that perishable body in the ground and transform it into an imperishable body, fit for eternity, reuniting that person's soul and spirit with their new imperishable body. So instead of seeing a quote, "Final resting place," in a cemetery, it's actually a temporary holding place for the believers body awaiting Christ's return when He'll raise the perishable body and transform it into an imperishable body.

Instead of wondering where the believer is after death or doubting, we know that the believer is in the presence of God because he believed in Christ as Savior and Lord. So while grieving the loss of a saved loved one is normal and good, it's good to grieve, it needs to be balanced or tempered and eventually outweighed by believing what God has said in His Word about where that loved one in Christ is now. But I want to add one more point. Point three. Trust what God has said about his attributes and his character in nature. For instance, His goodness, His faithfulness, His sovereignty. Because when you anchor your mind to the solid rock of Scripture, which reveals who this God is, that is what will hold you through the greatest storms of life. For example, Psalm 100:5 says, *For the Lord is good; His loving kindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations.*

During a hard trial, it's easy to have your mind go and maybe think the Lord isn't good; to maybe think He's distant. But the Bible affirms that the Lord is good. His loving kindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations. And not only that the Lord is good and faithful, but that He is in control. He is in sovereign control. He rules over this universe. Listen to Psalm 139. *My frame was not hidden*

from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written, The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.

We often read that passage in Psalm 139 and think about the pro-life basis that God formed us in our mother's wombs. But it also describes that God has ordained exactly our birth date, but also our death date. It's not random or by chance. God causes or allows everything that happens to happen. We can trust Him because He is good and sovereign over all the affairs of life. Nothing happens beyond his control. Listen to what it says in Romans 8:28. *And we know that God causes all things [that means the good things and the hard things] to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* We could go on forever about trusting God's perfect character, his attributes. I Peter 5:10-11. *After you have suffered for a little while, [Peter writes to these believers who are being persecuted] the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

What an incredibly powerful verse about how God allows suffering in our life. And it's for a little while, and it's painful, but the God of all grace, the God who gives priceless, powerful gifts to us to be able to endure, will do good things for our good and his glory through our trials. This is why Paul wrote to the Thessalonians a similar thing. He wanted to encourage them because they were doubting where their saved loved ones were when they die. They were expecting the return of Christ, but they were dying in the meantime. And what happens to them? So Paul writes, *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, [again died] so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.* There's that word again, hope expectant to assurance of something God has promised in the future, *For if we believe [here's how you get there] that Jesus died and rose again, [that's how you become a believer and can have this blessed hope of a resurrection] even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep [or died] in Jesus. For we say this to you by the word of the Lord, [This is what God has said] that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.*

So, if you're alive at the Lord's return, you're going to be taken up. If you've already died in the Lord, you will be taken up first before those who are living. *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them, those who are dead in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words.*

And what better comfort can there be when we as a believer are facing death, or when a loved one that we know as a believer has died, that their soul and spirit goes immediately into the presence of God? Their body is temporarily in the ground, just awaiting the return of Christ to resurrect them and reunite their soul and spirit with a new imperishable body. Comfort one another with these words.

The original question at the top of the program today, How to be sure of eternity in heaven? Number one, trust what God has revealed about His Son and be saved. In other words, you must be born again, as Jesus said, to have this confident assurance of future resurrection.

This should compel us to pray for and take opportunities to proclaim the gospel to our unsaved loved ones, because without salvation, death is the hugest enemy, and the hugest sorrow when it takes place. So trust what God has revealed about His Son and be saved. Number two, trust what God has revealed about Christ's resurrection, as guaranteeing the believers future resurrection. When we read and believe what God has promised about the future resurrection to heaven, it's based on the fact that Christ did rise from the dead.

If you think about the apostle Paul, he trusted God in these three points we've talked about today. That's why he could say when he's literally imprisoned and eventually going to be martyred, he could say in Philippians 1:18-19, *Yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that this this imprisonment will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.* And then he makes this incredible statement in verse 21. *For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain out in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.* Paul's not tricking himself here. He's no, "Keeping it positive." He's not "Hoping for good vibes," as you so often hear today. He is anchoring, he is trusting in the God who is fully trustworthy, and there is nothing more sure to trust in than God.

Thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. In just a moment, there'll be all kinds of information on this nonprofit radio ministry. Next weekend, we'll be doing a program on Revival, which will be good timing in light of what has been in the news about what is taking place at Asbury College. Let's be encouraged. We live in a challenging world that is full of sin and death, but we can trust Jesus Christ because He and His Word are The Truth and are the same yesterday, and today and forever. So until next time, "Think biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm!"

The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program, order a transcript or find out, "What must I do to be saved?" Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener supported nonprofit radio ministry furnished by the Overcomer Foundation. To make a donation, become a Christian worldview partner, order resources, subscribe to our free newsletter or contact us visit TheChristianWorldview.org, call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. That's Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. Thanks for listening to The Christian Worldview.