First Fruits First Heaven April 1, 2023

“*It is better for you to enter the Kingdom of God with one eye*” [Mark 9:47]

This morning I prayed for a family and community who had lost a great leader. A president. A man of honor. A believer. An influencer. His passing forces me to contemplate heaven.

Again and again, we are reminded how thin the veil is between life here and life beyond the veil. Death is both departure and arrival. Leaving one realm; entering another. Exiting from the physical; emerging into the spiritual.

Yeshua tells us the starting point for this transition happens before our physical demise. As the Firstfruits of Creation, He is the living, walking and talking proof that another dimension – The Kingdom of God - is “near” or “at hand.” Our resurrected Messiah is the irrefutable proof that heaven has come to earth.

We have a responsibility to dial in on this reality. Once we experience something, we carry the accountability for what we have learned. Were it not for the finality of physical life, we would ignore the constant reminder that our time here is limited, and thus immeasurably precious.

Having entered into eternity, any continuing misbehavior becomes a form of disobedience. Sin before salvation differs from that which comes after. Pray whatever debts and disappointments we commit after receiving God’s grace have been paid this side of the great divide.

This step of sanctification requires transparency – complete transparency. It’s all coming out into the open one day. Don’t wait for that to happen. Come clean. Come to heaven clean.

There are rewards for living a sanctified life. Although heaven has entered earth, there still remains for us a living sacrifice and need to repent for both our own ongoing disobedience as well as a willingness to suffer at the hands of others. We must ask our Father to further forgive us for not living the holy life He has prepared. Furthermore, like His only Son, our Heavenly Father asks us to take the hit on behalf of other sinners as well.

Wiping away our sin doesn’t not absolve us from all future accountability. Living in the Kingdom of God means listening to the Holy Spirit that lives within us - turning swiftly to repentance and humility.

I believe this is why our Lord advised us that is better to lose an eye or a hand in the present realm of existence. To pay our debt. To balance our accounts. All of them. I don’t treasure the idea of suffering, but I also don’t want to enter into eternity with baggage.

Why would God have given us His Firstfruits unless we needed to learn this lesson? Yeshua gave up everything. He sacrificed His life, His reputation, His standing, and His blood. He paid our debts for us. Every one of them is covered. Every mistake is forgiven.

Nevertheless, we need to accept this reality to live the life of freedom offered to us. In essence, God asks us to let go of everything of our old humanity, in order receive everything there is of His new heaven. Heaven starts and stays with us by recognizing our ongoing need of God’s grace. But, don’t be deceived because you have entered into eternity. Even though we have been forgiven, we still have a vital authoritative and accountable part to play this very day - prior to taking up permanent residence in the Kingdom of God.

Heaven has come down. Live accordingly.