



Big Idea:

Unending joy is the product of a Christ-centered conclusion.

-- False views of the Afterlife

- 1.) **Universalism** – The idea that God will eventually save everyone (contra John 5:28-29, Daniel 12:1-2)
 - 2.) **Second Chances** – Beliefs such as reincarnation & purgatory (contra Hebrews 9:27-28)
 - 3.) **Annihilationism** – Beliefs such as atheistic naturalism and unbeliever annihilation (contra Ecclesiastes 3:11, Mark 9:47-48)
- The question is not, “Will we live forever?” The question is “Where?”

-- Biblical View of the Afterlife – Eternity in Heaven or in Hell

-- Souls of the redeemed go directly into heaven.

-- Luke 23:43, 2 Corinthians 5:8

-- Jesus’ resurrection is the pattern of our own. Even as He received a new, glorified body, so will we when He comes again.

-- Souls of unrepentant sinners suffer in hell.

-- Matthew 13:49-50, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

-- It ultimately one’s own choice that sends a person to hell.

-- We preach hell because it is real, but we preach it with tears and with deep longing to see salvation (Ezekiel 18:31-32).

-- For those who reject Christ, this life is the closest thing to heaven you will ever see (Luke 16:24).

-- For those who receive Christ, this life is the closest thing to hell as you will ever know.

1.) A joyful **Now** is all about Christ (v. 18-21a)

-- Paul had joy in every circumstance that concluded in the exaltation of Jesus Christ.

-- v. 18 – Paul is far more interested in winning praise for Christ than winning praise from people.

-- v. 19 – Because his desire was Christ above all, Paul knew that, whatever the result, He would be delivered by Christ.

-- v. 20 – Paul's concern was not about what would happen to him but what testimony he would leave for his Lord.

-- We will never find real joy living for **Puny** purposes.

-- Only the glory of God in Christ is a purpose glorious enough to inspire real joy in every circumstance.

-- v. 21a – Living for Christ is the only truly joyful purpose in life, because His glory alone will endure.

2.) A joyful **future** is all about Christ (v. 21b, 23).

-- We do not delight *because* of death. Rather, we rejoice in God's victory over it in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:26).

-- For the believer in Christ, to die is **gain** (v 21b).

-- We gain perfect life, rest, and happiness (1 Corinthians 13:10, Revelation 21:3-5).

-- We gain all of this because we gain Christ completely.

-- The preeminent joy of heaven is the **presence** of Christ.

-- v. 23 – Paul's delight in death is Christ's presence.

-- John Owen – "The nearer anyone is to heaven, the more earnestly he desires to be there, because Christ is there."

-- Christ is not just the way to heaven; He is the very goal of heaven.

-- Heaven is the eternally delightful future of those who desire Christ. To really know Him is to delight in Him above all.

Application

1.) The best way to prepare for heaven and to be filled with its joy today is to get to know and love _

Jesus Christ.

2.) Live this life with eyes fixed on the next.

-- *Do you know Jesus Christ? Do you rejoice in Him supremely? Are you prepared to meet Him today?*