

Theme: Christians should pray and live with the reality and values of eternity in their view.

I. Intro – A Walk In the Woods

- A. Humorous book by Bill Bryson - walk Appalachian Trail
- B. Originally going to walk all 2100+ miles of it
- C. Invited many friends to join him - only one from High School accepted
- D. Bryson studied hiking, trained, prepared - long trip!
- E. Met at airport to go hike the trail - friend was WAY overweight, had not prepared
- F. Humorous very quickly as friend struggled - should have prepared
- G. Are we like the friend - no preparation for eternity?
- H. Why is an eternal perspective important? How do I foster an eternal perspective?

II. The Importance of Eternity In Jesus' Prayer

- A. Eternity is important in the closing words of the prayer
Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. ²⁵ "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." John 17:24–26
 - 1. Be with me - not on earth (they were already) but in heaven
 - 2. See my glory - this is the beatific vision of God's glory

- 3. Loved me before the creation of the world - a glimpse into eternity past
- 4. You have sent me - sent from heaven/eternity into our space/time

- B. Eternity is important at the beginning of the prayer
After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³ Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:1–3

- 1. Glorify Your Son - the exaltation of the Son, after His humiliation; an eternal exaltation - see Philippians 2:5-11
- 2. Eternal life - looking forward to life in eternity, not just now
- 3. Jesus Christ was sent - sent from heaven/eternity into our space/time

- C. Jesus is showing an eternal perspective in His prayer
 - 1. Eternity "bookends" the prayer - beginning and end of the prayer
 - 2. Jesus is certainly concerned and prays about temporal, this world events - and so should we
 - 3. But this is enclosed in an eternal perspective
 - 4. Everything in the prayer is really driven by the reality and values of eternity

III. Why We Must Pray & Work With An Eternal Perspective

- A. Because Jesus did - and we are to follow His example!
1. Jesus prayer begins and ends with an eternal focus
 2. We know Jesus' life was driven by an eternal focus
Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. ² **Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.** ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:1-3
- B. Because we need help in our struggle with the world
Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ **Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.** Hebrews 12:1-3
1. We are in a struggle with the world - and we need help
 2. We find this help by doing as Jesus did - an eternal focus

I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. John 17:14-19

1. Remember Jesus' call for us - to be in the world but not of it
2. This call is tough and can make us grow weary
3. The world will squeeze us to live in light of its 'reality'
4. But we need to focus on the true reality - eternity
5. CS Lewis - this world is but the Shadowlands
6. But unless we focus on eternity it will seem like this is the real world, and heaven is the shadowlands

IV. Applying the Word - Developing An Eternal Perspective

- A. Do I have an eternal perspective?
1. Are my prayers filled with eternal or only temporal concerns? (Does my prayer look like Jesus' prayer?)
 2. Do I tell others about Christ?
 3. Do I invest my time to serve God and His Kingdom?
 4. Do I invest my resources to further the work of God's kingdom?

5. Do my moral choices reflect the morality of this world or of eternity?

B. Developing an eternal perspective

1. Study the new heaven and earth, eternity

- a. Most Christians have huge misconceptions about eternity
- b. We think we will be ethereal spirits playing harps on a cloud forever
- c. That sounds utterly boring - because it is now how God made us!
- d. If we are to be driven by an eternal perspective - we have to first develop a **biblical** eternal perspective
- e. Resources
 1. Website - teachings & resources -> topics -> Heaven, Hell & Eternity
 2. Especially Life in the New Heavens and Earth, and the New Heavens & the New Earth (2 Parts)
 3. Books - Heaven (Randy Alcorn); Heaven Is A Place on Earth (Michael Wittmer)

2. Regularly participate in the means of grace

- a. The means of grace - those activities used by the Spirit of God to strengthen and renew us
 1. Word of God - regular intake to renew my mind
 2. Prayer - talking and listening to God; reorients me and my desires

3. Fellowship - encouragement, correction, strength

4. The Lord's Supper - we will take in a moment

b. We are in the toxic environment of the world 24/7 - we need a steady intake of eternal antibiotics!!!

C. The Lord's Supper - A foretaste of the heavenly feast

1. When Jesus gave us this meal He said He would not eat it again until eternity

2. That is going to be some feast!

On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine — the best of meats and the finest of wines.⁷

On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations;⁸ he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The Lord has spoken.

⁹ In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation." Isaiah 25:6–9

3. Today we will eat in anticipation of that meal

Praying With Eternity In View

John 17:24-26
August 4, 2013
Communion
Jude 1:24-25

Jude 1:24–25

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy —²⁵ to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.²⁵ Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them. John 17:23–26