



Welcome to Unity's Interactive Worship Service

**Today's Topic:
Heaven Is Like**

Power Point notes available at:
www.unityofbakersfield.org

Heaven Is Like

There's a story that is told of Abe Lincoln during his first campaign for Congress. Abe was attending a church service conducted by a fiery county preacher. After the congregation finished singing several stirring hymns, the preacher commanded, "Anyone who wants to go to heaven, sit down!" There was a thunderous sound as bottoms slapped the wooden pews. Everyone was seated, except Lincoln, who stood tall and straight.

Heaven Is Like

As heads turned and hushed whispers filled the church, the preacher looked somewhat puzzled, so he restated his command, "Anyone who doesn't want to go to hell, sit down." Lincoln, unmoved by the request, remained standing like a lanky lighthouse in the middle of whispering waves of chatter.

"Mr. Lincoln, if you're not going to heaven and you don't want to escape hell, where do you want to go?" thundered the preacher.

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Excruciating silence fell upon the congregation as every eye and ear in the place turned to Lincoln. As he turned slightly to one side, a broad smile came to his face. And he said...

"I'm going to Congress."

And as we all know, it can be heaven or it can be hell to serve in Congress. It depends on one's state of mind. I believe old Abe knew that.

Heaven Is Like

All the world religions have within their sacred writings images and stories about some place where one goes upon leaving this life. In our culture we call it heaven.

We all grew up in homes where the idea of heaven was a place all our relatives went when they passed on. It troubled me as a kid that God gave us a life of pain and suffering so we could have happiness and paradise only after we die.

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As a kid I was taught that heaven was a physical place with gates, guards, and a big book that had your name in it. And if your name wasn't in it you had to go to purgatory and wait until enough prayers were said on your behalf to get you released. Oh, the stuff we were taught as kids.

However, as an adult I wanted to know what the Master Teacher, Jesus, had to say about it.

Heaven Is Like

Matthew 13:44

“The kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. A man found it, and he concealed it. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”

Matthew 13:45-46

“Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”

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Matthew 13:52

“And he said to them,...the kingdom of Heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out his treasure both what is new and what is old.”

Matthew 13:33

“He told them another parable. The kingdom of Heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.” (Luke 13:18-19)

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Matthew 13:31-32

Jesus put another parable before them. He said, “The kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it grows larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree. The birds of the air can come and make nests in its branches.” (Mark 4:30-34 and Luke 13:18-19)

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Mark 4:26-27

And Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is like a man scattering seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows—he knows not how.”

Notice anything about these “kingdom of God” statements by Jesus? There’s something very important being implied in these parables.

Heaven Is Like

What I found intriguing about the parables and metaphors that are recorded in the synoptic gospels about what heaven is like, Jesus says nothing about heaven being a physical place out there or up there. In fact the only physical reference he made about the kingdom was that it was inside of us.

And when Pharisees demanded he tell them where the kingdom was he responded, “The kingdom of God is within you. (Luke 17:21)

Why is this so important for us to understand?

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To understand what heaven is like is to understand where Jesus was coming from and how he taught. It all comes down to this:

It’s a consciousness thing!

Jesus isn’t saying there’s no heaven, he’s teaching everyone that it’s going to be different for everyone based on their beliefs. Books have been written about a person’s death experience, and each experience is different according to that person’s consciousness about death and the hereafter.

Heaven Is Like

Think about this: If our thoughts (our consciousness) here on this physical plane create our experiences in this lifetime, why would that be any different on the spiritual plane?

I truly believe that John was on to something when he wrote of Jesus saying, "In my father's house are many rooms, and I now go to prepare one for you." (John 14:2) I understand this to mean that there is a place for every belief held in mind. After all it is the law of mind action, God's law.

Heaven Is Like

Over the years there have been several movies that have tried to deal with the idea of heaven and what heaven may be like. Two of my favorite movies are: What Dreams May Come (1998) with Robin Williams and The Shack (2017) with Tim McGraw. These two deal with our beliefs about the afterlife and God. It's about our consciousness and how it effects what we experience in the spiritual realm.

Heaven Is Like

So, if heaven is part of our divine right of consciousness, and in alignment with the law of mind action, what about the idea of hell? I like what Mark Twain had to say on the subject:

"I don't like to commit myself about heaven and hell – you see, I have friends in both places."

So, next week we'll look at "An Idea Called Hell."