

Chapter 10: Citizen- Longing For Home

Most people, if they had really learned to look into their own hearts, would know that they do want, and want acutely, something that cannot be had in this world. – C.S. Lewis

Home is the nagging ache of the human existence. We want to be settled somewhere safe; we want to be sheltered from impermanence. We are driven to find a place that knows us by name and receives us unconditionally.

How does the gospel make sense of this longing for home?

Identity Theft

- We often put our ultimate hope in things that don't last
- We look to satisfy our longings apart from Christ
 - o "The heart is an idol factory"—John Calvin
- We feel longing for home, but don't understand God as its true source
 - o Look for home in the narrative of marriage, motherhood, a well-appointed kitchen
 - These are GOOD gifts by not the truest most lasting reality of home as we know through the Gospel.
 - They have an expiration date!!
- Desires for home are real; but we try to temporarily soothe them.
- Earthly pleasures were NEVER meant to satisfy our desires but point us to the REAL thing!!

Home can be enjoyed in this life, but only as an appetizer of the coming feast. Makes me think of this song We Will Feast by Sandra McCracken.

Once again, we must look to Scripture to find our way to God's permanent promise of hope.

Identity Truth

According to Scripture, REST= biblical shorthand for HOME

When God rested on the 7th day of creation, it wasn't him simply catching his breath—His REST was an act of enthronement. Earth wasn't simply a home for humanity, it was also a home for God.

- God the first homemaker
 - o He brought humanity to HIS table
 - o The first children (and all who've come after) have been greedy for someone else's food.
- Because of SIN we've lost home—and have been looking for it ever since.

- BUT—the Gospel is the GOOD NEWS that God did not leave his people to exile.
 - o See this Israel’s story
 - God settled them in a new home, but it too was forfeited by sin, and God’s people were wondering again
 - o Then a new light dawned, the God who longed to share a home with his people put on flesh and “tabernacled” among his people (John 1:14).
 - Creation – first temple; Jesus’s body—the final temple
 - Creation—first home God built for humanity; Jesus—promise for all the prodigals
 - o He hasn’t given up on his desire to extend welcome
- Good news of the Gospel: the sin that estranges us from our home in God is defeated.
 - o We’re reconciled and set down as guest of honor at his feast!!
 - o The home we left behind in Genesis 3, is restored to us because of the person and work of Jesus.
- Every promise of home finds its yes in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20)

Identity Transformed

How then shall we live? This is always the practical question on the other side of every theological truth. If the gospel is promising me a home with Christ, what does that mean in my everyday reality??

God richly provides us with everything to enjoy (1 Timothy 6:17)

- Not every pleasure in this life is a guilty one
- Everything we receive, even a family and earthly home is from God

We need to know the difference between the temporary and the permanent, the earthly and the eternal

- “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:19-20).

To take hold of the life to come—invest our treasure in the unseen reality of eternity!! Our money (and our calendars) tell us what home story we’re living.

In Hebrews, we see the suffering saints

- They weren’t just “grinning and bearing it”
- They JOYFULLY accepted the plundering of their property since they knew that they themselves had a better possession and an abiding one (Hebrews 10:34)
- They held home in this life loosely, there was nothing in this life they couldn’t lose.
- They knew the true story of home—oriented them and their desires rightly
- They desired a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he prepared for them a city (Hebrews 11:13-14, 16).

Home, as the gospel promises it, is REST from the chronic anxiety that this life must be good to us.

- This world will disappoint at best, be cruel at worst, and was never meant to satisfy our deepest longings.
- We are strangers and exiles on this earth.

Faith is the way we practice waiting on a better world—the Sabbath rest of God (Heb 4:9)

On one hand

- In God's story, home is, a borrowed city we're all tenants in this life.
- None of us knows how long we're staying.

In another sense

- Both the garden and new Jerusalem in view, home is the place we leave and the place which we return.
- It's nostalgia and memory; it's anticipation too

Home is the two magnetic poles of the human story—and the open invitation of God. There's always enough room at God's table. Christ says *welcome home*.