

My True Home

'For here we do not have an enduring city...'
(Hebrews 13:14)

Peter Walker
www.1peter1three.weebly.com

‘Jesus said, ‘In my Father’s house there are many rooms. I am going to prepare a place for you. When it is ready, I will come get you and bring you there.’

(John 14:1-3)

Introduction

Your experience of 'home' here on earth is at best a metaphor, at worst a false impression. In either case – all cases – no home here on earth is your *'true home'*.

Your true home is only in heaven. It is with God your loving and *good* Father, your Creator, and with his people. Your true home is eternal, warm, safe and full of Spirit and life. No more pain, stain, guilt, regret, suffering, tears or death. It is forever.

Jesus said he was the *'door'* to heaven. We pass through him in faith, in following, and we are on God's sure path to heaven.

'Jesus said, 'I am the door, and anyone who comes through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture.'

(John 10:9)

'God himself will be with you. He will wipe away every tear from your eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.' (Revelation 21:3-4)

In this short book we consider our 'true home' with God: heaven. By the Spirit of Christ we can taste heaven here and now on earth. But there will come a day when we actually walk through the city gates of heaven, in a new body and a freed spirit, and will live there forever.

1. **Heaven Came Down**

I grew up on ships. As a kid, from the age of 4, I lived on ships for 4 years.

One of the amazing things about life on a ship, is the exposure to strong winds, crashing waves, expanses of water and sky; quiet and glassy waters, sunlight on all sides.

On a rare occasion we would swim off the ship. They would lower a raft to the water, hold it with ropes, and we would swim and then climb back up on the ship.

Now this picture of a rope from a ship to a raft, or more dramatically, from a ship to a person out in the water, is what comes to my mind when I think of heaven coming down to earth. I think of being thrown a rope – catching a rope – when in dangerous waters. That rope is everything. It now connects you to safety. It now assures you of safety. Over the following moments, minutes, you come closer and closer to actually being lifted up into *full* safety.

Jesus – God himself¹ – came down from heaven to earth to save us. In a sense, he threw us the rope. In an even truer sense, Jesus *is* the rope. He actually dived into the stormy waters and caught us before we went under, and with strength and power pulled us back to shore, to

¹ Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 9:6-7, John 1:1-5,14

safety. Heaven came to earth in the person of Jesus.

‘Jesus made himself nothing, took on the nature of humankind...’ (Philippians 2:7-8)

‘He reached down... and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters.’ (2 Samuel 22:17)

Considering this analogy a little more, when a man in stormy waters catches a rope, safety is assured. He still finds himself in the waters, but safety is guaranteed. His life is spared. And with every passing minute he is pulled closer to the full experience of safety.

So it is with Jesus in our lives. He meets us here, and saves our lives. His Spirit pours into us and guarantees us of his presence with us. However, we do still find ourselves here – here on earth, here in the stormy waters, so to speak. Jesus came to us here in the storm. He saved us here in the storm. We are saved, safe. But we are - for now – still here in the storm.

‘Jesus said, ‘In this life you will have trouble. But take heart, I have overcome the world.’
(John 16:33)

Jesus is with us here and now, here in the storm. We are saved and safe. But with every passing minute we are pulled closer to the full experience of safety, the actual arrival to the shores of heaven.

‘The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, ever-brighter until the full light of day.’ (Proverbs 4:18)

‘For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.’ (1 Corinthians 13:12)

‘Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.’ (1 John 3:2)

Let me share another experience of mine in the ocean that reminds of this very thing – being safe and assured, but not yet ashore.

When I was married, had one young child, my wife and I met friends at the beach. I had not been swimming for years, and honestly was not ‘fit’ for much cardio. But when I saw the waters and the sky I was inspired to swim for a buoy that I saw floating out in the distance.

The buoy did not look far away. I set out swimming for it. When I realized that I was exhausted, dangerously so, the buoy was closer to me than the shore. So I thought reaching the buoy would at least give me something to hold on to, and rest for a while.

But it got worse. When I did reach the buoy, the

waters were a little choppy, and the buoy was really too wide, too big, for me to lean on or hold on to in any restful way. My shoulders were burning with fatigue. I could see my family back on the shore, too far to call, because the wind and water just deafen any sound. Fear shot through my heart. I really thought I could not make it back.

I prayed. I decided I needed to just swim on my back towards the shore. Not use my arms, just kick. I remember thinking that if wind or the tide was moving out to sea, I would be taken with it. I had zero energy. I pushed off on my back towards shore, closed my eyes, and just kicked slowly. Fortunately, when I glanced, I could see that I was moving towards shore, not away from it. I kept going.

About one third the way back something amazing happened. I looked to see where I was. As I stalled to tread water for just a second, I felt my feet touch sand! I had come upon a type of sandbar under the water. My feet rested on the sand, and my heart flooded with relief. I thanked Jesus. I couldn't believe this. I stood up on the sandbar and waved to the family. Everything was different in an instant.

Note: I was still at sea. I still had distance to swim in deep waters. But I was *met* at sea. I could rest. I could now see the shore, and knew I would get there. Not there yet, but assured. Completely assured. Saved. Safe.

***'Forgetting what is behind... I press on
toward the goal... for which God has called
me heavenward in Christ Jesus.'***

(Philippians 3:13-14)

2. Longing for Heaven

'Abraham was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.' (Hebrews 11:10)

Even men and women who were very close to God here on earth, they longed for heaven. They looked forward to the next life, the eternal city, the perfect world.

It is OK to long for heaven. It is OK to look past this life, to the next life.

On the cover of this book I note the verse:

'For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.' (Hebrews 13:14)

We are looking for the city that is to come. The city that endures. The city with no crime, no fear, no pressure, no bills, no regret, no secret shame, no tiredness or insecurity or loneliness.

No matter what beautiful skyline we see here on earth – like the city on the cover of this book – it is soaked in sin. People lock their doors, look over their shoulders, stay in after dark, etc. etc.

But in heaven, in our next and final home, the city has streets of gold and crystal clear waters and free food and wine bursting with flavor!

'Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit... There will be no more night...' (Revelation 22:1-5)

'Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.' (Isaiah 55:1)

3. Safe!

'The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous [You!]¹ run into it and they are safe!' (Proverbs 18:10)

Home – a 'true', a good home – is a safe place. Not all of us experience that here on earth. But that is what every home is meant to be. And that is what your true home in heaven is. It is safe, through and through. Peace is the air there, and God himself is the Light. Safe in the rooms, in the halls, in the gardens. There will be no darkness. Nothing but light and peace.

'There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light.' (Revelation 22:5)

I have been conscious of the deep divide between all people in this mortal life. I don't mean to be depressing here, but bear with me a minute on this reflection...

There are really no 'groups' here on earth. They just don't exist. There are no nations, no clubs, no fraternities, sororities, even family ties... OK, now don't get me wrong, yes, there are these things. But they are man-made, woman-made, and only as dependable, therefore, as man and

¹ In this verse 'righteous' does not refer to 'good' people, but rather to those who come to God, who believe and follow Jesus.

woman.

Jesus' own brothers denied him.¹ And check out what Jesus did when those who *did* believe in him wanted to create some kind of movement around him, wanted to bond and club together:

'Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people... He knew what was in each person.' (John 2:24-25)

Jesus loved people. He made a group of disciples, etc. But deep down in spirit there is only one true relationship any man, woman or child can have, and that is with God. We must live this life to establish that relationship with God, and then build our lives on it. Every other connection and relationship – *group, club, society, membership, employer, family* – is a distant second, and on a completely different level. These must never compete or be confused with our allegiance to Jesus Christ.

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, he said:

'The greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul and mind.'
(Matthew 22:37)

In this life, even when we do find ourselves as part of a 'good' group of friends or nation or

¹ Mark 6:1-5; John 7:1-5

army, our hearts can suddenly sink and we feel that we are alone. We can suddenly feel that this cause or group we are committed to, part of, well, that it isn't really 'real'. We might see people stepping away from it, the zeal and cause fading. The ties and enthusiasm just aren't what they once were or seemed to be. We feel alone.

There is some truth in this that we all *do* need to feel. There is no cause or citizenship or membership that is *truly* real. They are systems that we fabricate here for the sake of survival, for the sake of pleasure and prosperity. But they are time-bound, earth-bound, people-bound. They are not eternal. I think this is the 'feeling' we get, a spiritual type of feeling, when we see abandoned buildings or businesses; sometimes even abandoned towns. We see with our eyes the time-limited causes and seasons of this life. They pass.

'Jesus said, 'What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul?' (Mark 8:36)

We must stop. We must whisper, ***'Teach us, Lord, to number our days.'*** (Psalm 90:12)

We must ponder these words of Solomon:

'Remember your creator before the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.'
(Ecclesiastes 12:1,7)

Now against this backdrop of the 'temporal', the finite, here is the good news, the *great* news! Here is what God has done for us so that we can know true relationship with other people, and experience true togetherness now and forevermore...

It comes back to the opening verse of this chapter, that the name of the Lord is *the* strong tower, the safe place. That is where we must start and then build.

So Jesus – '*God with us*'¹ – came and through the most spiritual of stories – death and resurrection – he brings our spirits back into relationship with God eternal. We come alive! God – the eternal, pure and true – now courses through our veins!

'Whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.' (1 Corinthians 6:17)

The name of Jesus is our strong tower – in other words his true person, his presence, his Spirit. We have believed on him, come through him as the '*door*'², and our lives are safe in his kingdom. Our spirits are now united with his Spirit. We are eternal.

'Jesus said, 'Anyone who believes in me, when they die, they will live again!''
(John 11:25-26)

¹ Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23

² John 10:9

With the Spirit of God in our own spirits, we have a true and pure relationship with God. And with his Spirit, we can experience 'truer' relationships with people. We recognize that they are made in God's image, we see that they can – if they choose Christ – live forever. We know God's will is to unite with everyone, and we can relate to people with this end goal in sight, in spirit.¹

This changes everything! We can begin, with our brothers and sisters in Jesus, to build relationships that we believe will go on past the grave. We can unite in purposes that build God's kingdom, and reach people for Jesus – not just 'earth' purposes, but eternal purposes. And we can dream. We can dream about these relationships and other ones that will be perfect once we get to heaven. *Perfect!* There will be no more misunderstanding, no more deception or jealousy (*yes, even with family – biological and spiritual*), no more complex boundaries and protocol. Just perfect 'home'. Your true home.

'Jesus said, 'Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.' (Luke 10:20)

So whether or not you have experience of 'home' here on earth – i.e. a safe place, safe relationships – in Jesus you will have that perfect home in heaven. Yes, it can start now with Jesus in your heart, God in your spirit, and relationships and purposes built on him. But

¹ Genesis 1:27; 2 Peter 3:9, 1 Timothy 2:4; Matthew 18:14

even in Jesus here on earth, in Christian relationships and Christian activities, our hope is stored up for us in heaven: ‘... **the inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you.**’
(1 Peter 1:4)

So yes, with Christ in our hearts we are in God’s ‘**strong tower.**’ In fact, we are told that we are ‘**hidden with Christ in God.**’ (Colossians 3:3) So we live life with this Spirit of God in us and through us. However, our ‘true home’ – heaven itself – will be surpassing! It will be pure to the core, imperishable, unfading, joy and peace.

Heaven is our true home.

4. Legacy

Everyone's upbringing makes a strong impact!

I remember one day when I was a teenager, I was complaining to my mom about something to do with my dad. She said: *'Well, if you improve on your father to the same degree he improved on his, you will be a good father indeed!'*

My dad had very little affection shown to him by his own father, who only met him after serving 2 years in World War 2. I wonder about my grandfather's upbringing, too. What was his experience of family, provision, protection, affirmation and encouragement. I wonder.

I had a good upbringing. Parents were people of sincere faith, and showed affection, spoke words of affirmation. I find myself now as a father, largely just imitating what I experienced. I can do this because what was given to me and modeled to me was good. So I can just pass it on.

Now, this was not the case with my dad. He did not have the modeling, the experiences. He had to learn, believe, and strive to implement, to create a new 'real' for his children, a new legacy, as it were.

Maybe this is your story? Maybe you had a childhood that did not give you the tools – the true, family and parenting tools – that you need, that you believe to be good. So maybe you have

to look elsewhere for examples, for teaching, for modeling.

I admire people who create new paths – better paths – than those they experienced. I admire them deeply! They are cutting new paths, not just treading old ones.

When it comes to the concept of ‘home’ – for self or for a family unit – this is particularly deep. Why? Because a ‘home’ experience here on earth is, in a sense, what we all live for, work for, build and sacrifice for. It is our safe place, warm place, where we hang up our coat and actually eat from the fruit of our labor. We rest.

God worked for six days, and rested on the seventh. After each day he looked on his work, and contemplated. He enjoyed seeing what he had accomplished.

This space of looking back on our day’s work, resting, and eating from the fruit of our labor, this is ‘home’. It should be a safe space, a place we rest.

‘Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life. You should mind your own business and work with your hands, so that your daily life will win the respect of people, and you will not be dependent on others.’

(1 Thessalonians 4:11-12)

Listen, I say again that every home experience

we create here on earth is, well, at best a metaphor of what heaven will be, at worst a false impression. There are many people – I would say most people – that cannot create a home ‘legacy’ here on earth that resembles what they want, what they believe in, what they long for – for themselves and their loved ones. We live in a broken world, riddled with pain and sin, and very few of us can create even a small space of peace above and beyond the daily grind to survive.

So no one should feel bad if they just cannot reach and grasp a home life or ‘legacy’ that they are proud of here on earth. We are not promised this by Jesus. And this is why the good news of Christ is so very good! He said it was good news for the poor.¹ Why? Because after this very short life, the poor will be poor no more. In fact, the poor here on earth – the ‘last’ – will be first in heaven!

‘The last will be first.’ (Matthew 20:16)

The good news about our home in heaven, is because most people will not, cannot, make much of a home here on earth. And the Word of Christ was that *he* is making us a home in heaven, and that we should rejoice because our names are written there. Very soon each one of us – poor, rich – will meet our Maker and pass through the gates of our eternal home, our true

¹ Luke 4:18

home.

‘Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.’ (Matthew 6:19-21)

By all means, enjoy the good gifts the Father gives you. Build a home, and thank Jesus for it. Commit it to the Lord, and let his peace fill it. But hold it loosely. Store up for yourself treasures – *inheritance, legacy* – in heaven. What you build there will never rot, decay, lose value, need repair, cause divisions, etc.

‘Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.’ (1 Timothy 6:17-19)

5. All Things New

Jesus owns the world. He is going to fully restore it, and come back and take it one day.

It is important to understand, however, that until that final day comes, Jesus is *most* concerned about the heart and soul of the individual. He is not concerned about brick and mortar, but about spirit and life.

‘Jesus said, ‘The kingdom of God is not something that you see with your eyes... because the kingdom of God is within you.’
(Luke 17:21)

I love when I see a church building or some structure that is for Christ and doing his work. I get this feeling like the kingdom is advancing, ground is being taken. There is a measure of truth in this, but only in the sense of a ‘metaphor’. God is after the heart of the individual. If a building is used by God to reach more hearts with the gospel of Jesus, then it is a useful structure indeed. But the hearts of people are the true ‘stones’ of the eternal building, the true church. Not the bricks we see, but the souls of people.

‘You are members of God’s household. Jesus Christ is the cornerstone, and in him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple. You are being built together to become a dwelling in which

God lives by his Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

We are told that Jesus is the ***'living stone'***, and that we also are ***'like living stones'***. (1 Peter 2:4-5) The kingdom of God here and now is built by souls, not bricks.

In the same way, I sometimes get a little discouraged when I see an old, abandoned church, or a derelict, shut-down Christian ministry. But again, the church and the ministry were never about the buildings, the properties. The kingdom was only advanced insofar as hearts and souls were reached through the doors of these places.

'The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you – they are Spirit and life.' (John 6:63)

Now, we can and should take heart when we see things of this world invaded, as it were, changed, based on the revelation of Jesus Christ. When we see true justice happen, evil exposed and goodness protected, this is a blessing from God! When we see laws enacted that protect the innocent, and reflect wisdom and fairness and mercy and freedom to worship God, this is 'heaven come down', and we can rejoice!

We were indeed taught to pray by Jesus for his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.¹

¹ Matthew 6:9-13

However, we must remember that God's will this side of glory is a surrendered heart to Jesus. His will is from the inside out. God delights in the heart of a person, a heart united to himself through repentance and faith. Here the eternal is plugged in. Here salvation happens, so that when this body ultimately dies and decays, that spirit will be clothed with a new, eternal body, in a kingdom that never fades, spoils, or decays.

Yes, Jesus is **'making all things new.'** He said it himself.¹ And when we see his will, his name, break into earth as it is in heaven, that is to be celebrated. But we must never get distracted with metaphors – even material ones – and lose sight of our **'first love'**² – which is spirit and truth.

Jesus said he looked for worshippers in **'spirit and truth'**,³ not people in their Sunday best inside a building somewhere. He looks at the heart.

'People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.' (1 Samuel 16:7)

We can be encouraged when we see structures rise here on earth – churches, ministries, and all things good and true. But we must always remember and invest in the soul, the heart, the spirit of the individual. God's kingdom is in the

¹ Revelation 21:5

² Revelation 2:1-5

³ John 4:24

heart of a person.

Jesus himself rejoiced with the disciples when they reported things actually happening and changing because of outreach, including the casting out of demons. But then Jesus said to them, in this moment of discussing those things that can be seen with the eyes: ***'Do not rejoice that demons submit to you, but that your names are written in heaven.'*** (Luke 10:20)

Jesus was happy for them and with them, but brought them back to the eternal vision, the ultimate hope, to that future and city that would last.

'So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.'
(2 Corinthians 4:18)

6. Your True Home

After Jesus had completed his mission here on earth – *paying for sin, defeating death, walking with you and me* – he said:

‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’ (Matthew 28:18)

Jesus made his plan clear to us in Scripture. He said he is going to make his name known throughout the whole world, calling people to repentance and faith, and then he will come back to earth.

He will come at a point in history, not when all people believe, but rather when the whole world has been reached with his message. He will come through the clouds and bring an end to history as we know it.¹

‘The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.’

(1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

I’ve heard our life with Jesus here on earth

¹ Luke 24:46-47, Matthew 24:30-42

described as **‘Already and Not Yet’**. Yes, we can know him now and experience his presence now; we can – and must – pray and work for his kingdom to come here on earth as it is in heaven. So while we are here, we pull heaven down to earth.

However, what lay ahead – the full experience of heaven, eternal life, perfection and joy – is so much more! We’re told that Abraham was looking forward to the city with foundations whose architect and builder is God. We’re told that here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city to come. We’re told to fix our eyes on the unseen, that which is eternal. We’re told that Jesus himself had joy set before him, had a goal up ahead, that carried him through his suffering here on earth.¹

We call heaven to earth while we are here. But we do set our gaze on our ultimate destiny, our true home, which is heaven itself. Jesus said he was going to prepare this place for us, then he would return and take us there. Simple as that.

I end with this short reflection. In heaven I think of two types of complete and powerful healing. First, that healing balm that comes over, across, the scars of pain done to us. Your pain will be no more, it will, in fact, never have happened. You will not be trying to step over these scars anymore, trying to forget, to process... No. Your

¹ Hebrews 12:1-2

pain will never have been, and your name will be new.

Secondly, there will be the healing over our regret, our sorrow, things we have done and wish we had not. Jesus not only died to pay for our sin, but we are told he **'became sin for us.'**¹ When we pass through the door of Christ in faith, and then ultimately through the golden gates of heaven, we will never have sinned. No memory of the pain we caused others, no regret, no guilt. It will never have happened, and we will have a new name.

'On each side of the river stood the tree of life... And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.' (Revelation 22:2)

'I will give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.' (Revelation 2:17)

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:21

Thank you for taking time to read this book. I hope it encouraged you!

For more free devotionals, videos and books, please visit:

www.1peter1three.weebly.com



'In quietness and trust is your strength.'
(Isaiah 30:15)

Notes: