

I AM THANKFUL...

That life is more than this life, *Luke 12:23*

Listening to conversations about the election gave me the impression that many people believe *everything* depends on who wins the presidency. The level of worry and anger shocked me; few people seemed to experience “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding” (*Philippians 4:6-7*). Obviously, life’s problems ought to concern us and, as God’s representatives in the world, we need to respond to those difficulties in ways that display His justice, mercy, and love (*1 Peter 2:9-12*). But living as God’s representatives in the world involves advocating for a message that holds an important place in the peace Paul mentioned in *Philippians 4:6-7*. That message, and the peace it gives to us, offers another reason for our thankfulness.

This lesson continues our month-long focus on some of the reasons that motivate our thankfulness in our challenging times. We will consider the following reason for our thankfulness:

We are thankful because there is a life after this life.

A new heaven and a new earth

- Jesus’ comment that “life is more than food and the body more than clothing” ¹ (*Luke 12:23*) restates a message repeated throughout the Bible – **a reality larger and more significant than our daily lives exists.**
- Consider, for example, some of the New Testament passages that address that reality:
 - Jesus declared, “I am the resurrection and the life” to Lazarus’ mourning family and promised life even after death to anyone who believed in him (*John 11:25*).
 - Jesus’ resurrection displayed his ability to fulfill his promise – his resurrection guarantees the bodily resurrection of those who believe in him (*1 Corinthians 15:1-34*; *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*).
 - But Jesus’ resurrection will not merely reanimate corpses; his promised resurrection will transform peoples’ bodies to match his resurrection body (*Philippians 3:20-21*; *1 Corinthians 15:35-49*).
 - The New Testament closes with John’s vision of that transformed future reality, which involves a world without the problems, pains, and concerns of our current reality (*Revelation 21:1-4*; *22:1-3*).
 - Problems, pains, and concerns populate this life because of human rebellion (*Genesis 3:17-19*; *Romans 1:18-32*; *James 3:16*).

¹ All quotes from the Bible come from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV Permanent Text Edition, Crossway, 2016) unless otherwise noted.



- Even though we currently live in a cursed world, Paul wrote that God will set the world “free from its bondage to corruption” (*Romans 8:18-23*).
 - God has charged Jesus with the responsibility of freeing the world by defeating sin and restoring His plan for humanity (*1 Corinthians 15:20-28*).
 - The Bible portrays God’s restored plan as “a new heaven and a new earth” (*Isaiah 65:17; 66:18-24; 2 Peter 3:11-13; Revelation 22:1-5*).
- Jesus’ promise of a life after this life brings joy and peace to our present lives because it assures us of a better life after this life and guarantees our place in it, if we believe and obey him (*cf. John 11:25*).

Applications

- We are defined by our relationship with Jesus rather than merely our place or our possessions in the present world.
- We are defined by the promises Jesus makes to us rather than the actions of any other person.
- We can experience real peace in this life regardless of our circumstances because of Jesus’ promises of a life after this life.
- We do not have to fight and plan to get ahead in this life because we recognize that life extends far beyond just this present life.
- The greatest good in this life does not, therefore, center on anything in this life. It instead centers on our belief in Jesus that motivates us to act like him.
- We can be at peace in this life because God promises that “all things work together for good” for all people who commit themselves to Him through Jesus, a good that finds its fullest expression in the life after this life (*Romans 8:28-30*).

As we move towards the Thanksgiving holiday, remember to be thankful for Jesus’ promise of a life after this life. His promise guarantees anyone who commits their life to him not just a life after this life, but a better and unending life. We have good reason to be thankful!

