

READING

Heaven, chs. 5-7

KEY TEXTS

Luke 23; Phil. 1; 2 Cor. 5; Rev. 6

CENTRAL TRUTH: Believers who die are consciously with Christ in the present Heaven - 'better by far' (Philippians 1:23, NIV) - while resurrection and life on the New Earth remain the final Christian hope.

What Happens When We Die? Two Horizons of Christian Hope

	Present Heaven	Final resurrected life
When?	From death until resurrection	After Christ's return, resurrection, judgment, and renewal
What may we say?	Believers are consciously with Christ, secure in him, and awaiting completion	God's people live bodily with Christ in the renewed creation
Why it matters	Death cannot separate the believer from Christ	God redeems the whole person and creation; death does not have the last word

Words of Comfort

Because this person belonged to Christ, we trust that they are with Christ now. We grieve because death has caused a real rupture. We hope because Christ will raise his people and renew creation.

Personal Response

Name silently or write the name of someone whose death makes this hope personal:

Jesus, I entrust _____ to your mercy and care.

The promise I need to hold tonight is:

The grief I need permission to carry is:

For Next Wednesday

Week Four - God's Plan to Renew Creation

Read: Heaven, chapters 8-10.

Bring: One question about resurrection, redemption, or what God's future means for the creation we inhabit now.