

Session 4

ETERNAL LIFE

John 3:16; Colossians 3:1-4; John 10:24-30

Memory Verse

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

– JOHN 3:16, CSB



Eternal Life

THEOLOGICAL THEME: Whoever believes in Jesus receives salvation and eternal life with Him. The promise of a secure eternity in heaven provides motivation to share with others how they too can know Jesus and be certain where they will spend eternity.

Just about any consumable item you buy has an expiration date. From bread to soft drinks, you can find a “best if used by” date indicating how long that item is viable for consumption. If you choose to consume it after the date, the manufacturer is not responsible for what happens or whether the product tastes or performs to expectations.

There are two kinds of people. The ones who live by the expiration date and throw things out if they even get close to it. Then there are those people view the best if used by date as a suggestion. They might sniff and inspect a product visually to determine whether it should be used or not. If the item seems normal, they will use it regardless of what the date says. Thankfully, the good news of Jesus has no expiration date.



What type of person are you when it comes to expiration dates?



What's the furthest out of date you have ever used something?



What is the oddest thing you've ever noticed an expiration date on?

Session Summary

The good news of the gospel is not limited to life on earth but extends to believers for eternity. Scripture makes it clear that we will live forever in one of two places. Those who place faith in Christ receive the blessings of life with Him on earth and the reward of eternity in heaven. There is no expiration date on the love of God for His people, regardless of what the world might say.

Too many people focus on living a long life on earth instead of living a deep and meaningful life that is devoted to following Jesus. When you are more connected with the realities of God's kingdom than you are focused on living your life to the standards of the world, your life will be one of influence for the sake of the gospel. Every Christ-follower should be committed to sharing the promise of the gospel with the people they encounter because everyone will live eternally—either with God or without Him.

1. Eternal Promise (John 3:16-21)

John 3:16 ends with the promise of eternal life. Anyone who places his or her faith in Jesus is promised eternal life. Some translations use the term everlasting life. Either one stresses the length and duration of the love God has for us. His love for us will never change and it will last for eternity. In a world where everything has a limited shelf life or an expiration date, God's love stands forever.

Though we deserve the punishment for our sins, God did not send Jesus to bring condemnation. He sent Jesus to reveal the love God has for us and to give the opportunity for salvation to any who believe. Though there will be condemnation for those who reject Jesus, the promise is that when we turn from our sin and accept Jesus, eternity is our reward. Anyone who rejects the offer of faith through grace makes the choice to face God's condemnation. God offers salvation freely to everyone, but it is each person's responsibility to receive this gift of grace.

Why is it important to recognize that each person must choose what to do about Jesus?

When you compare eternity in heaven with eternity in hell, it seems to be no contest, yet there are those who continually reject Jesus. Why? Though Jesus came to offer rescue from the condemnation we deserve for our sin, He taught that many people are drawn to darkness over the light. People love their sin and love darkness because their works are evil (see John 3:19).

What does it mean to love the darkness? What are some ways you see this taking place in the world? Where are you tempted to love the darkness over the light of Jesus?


The darkness offers hidden protection. It is also indicative of the state of the souls of those who do not know Jesus. Jesus is the light of the world and in Him is no darkness. Those who place their faith in Jesus are inviting His light into their lives. Whereas those who reject Jesus choose to stay in the dark. Evil flourishes in darkness and the light has no fellowship with darkness. Rejecting one is the equivalent of accepting the other. There can be no middle ground.

When we live by the truth, we choose the light over the darkness. We do this by living up to what is true and right in an honest, righteous life. We reflect the light that is Jesus to the dark world around us when we are intentional about living like Him. The choices we have every day offer continual opportunities to be the light and share that light with those around us. Clinging to the promise of eternity with Jesus motivates us to keep choosing the light.

Application: Why is important to know and cling to the promise of eternity with Jesus?


2. Eternal Focus (Colossians 3:1-4)

Paul spoke to the issue of making right choices and living righteously daily. The promise of eternity should be a motivation for right living, but how do we know the right choices to make?

 Which do you struggle with the most, knowing what to do for righteous living or knowing how to do it?


Paul wrote to believers like us who had been raised with Christ by placing their faith in Him. Once you have been raised with Christ you are empowered to live a righteous life that reflects your faith and looks like Jesus. No longer should your goal be to fit in with the world and like those who are still lost. Our goal is to be like Jesus. That means living differently than the world and making choices that reflect the truth of our faith.

Paul said to start with what you seek. People who don't know Jesus only think about the things of the world that are temporary. Yet those who know Christ and have been changed by Him seek the things that are above. We should seek heavenly things where Christ is now sitting at the right hand of God. This specifically denotes the sovereign rule Jesus now exercises. We need to recognize that our Savior is powerful, holy, righteous, and in control. When we better understand who Jesus is and the kind of power He has, it will make it easier to surrender to His authority.

 How does it change your perspective of Jesus when you recognize His complete authority?


We seek after what our minds are fixed on. We go where we gaze. This is why Paul instructed us to set our minds on things above. When our hearts and minds are connected to heavenly things, we will see a difference in the choices we make on earth. Setting our minds on and seeking after heavenly things is all about our focus and mindset. When our minds are set on something, we think about it. We meditate on it. We study it and seek to know more about over everything else. That doesn't mean we ignore our work or family responsibilities; it means heavenly things take priority.

Further motivation for believers comes from knowing Jesus is now hidden in heaven, but He will reappear gloriously, and we will be with Him. This is referencing the return of Jesus in His Second Coming. Notice that in talking about Jesus, Paul described Christ as “your life.” Think about what that means. There are many things people may focus on to the point that others see it as being “their life.” This can be career, sports, success, material possessions, or anything else that dominates our thoughts and actions. True believers will seek to grow in their faith to the point that others see Jesus as their life.


 **Application: What do you need to do so your mind is set on things above and Jesus is your life?**

3. Eternal Security (John 10:24-30)

We live with eternal focus because we have the promise of eternity. Further, we have eternal security. In John 10, Jesus spoke about this. He was responding to questions from the religious leaders. They were putting the blame for their own unbelief into Jesus’s shoulders because they did not like the answers He gave to their questions. Instead of accepting the truth He spoke and accepting responsibility themselves, they preferred to remain in their unbelief.


 **When have you struggled to accept the truth and been tempted to blame someone or something else?**

Jesus spoke plainly and used an analogy that was familiar in that day. He referred to Himself as the shepherd and the people as the sheep. His audience would have been quite aware of the relationship between sheep and the shepherd. There was no reason for them to misunderstand what He was saying, yet they did. Why? As Jesus pointed out, they did not believe because they were not among His sheep. The relationship between sheep and shepherd is intimate, and they know and recognize each other because of the time spent together. Sheep respond to the voice of their shepherd because they know and trust His voice. As believers, we are the sheep who need to recognize and respond to the voice of Jesus, our Shepherd.

 How well would you say you know and listen to Jesus's voice? What are some ways we grow in this?

The reward for the sheep who know and respond to the Good Shepherd is eternal life. Jesus promised that those who are among His flock will receive eternal life and never perish. This is not about physical death but refers to where we will reside for eternity. Though our physical lives may be destroyed through sickness, disease, or anything else, our souls will be safe forever with Christ.

The promise of eternity also includes a promise of security. In a world where we are constantly focused on shelf life and relationships that may not last, it builds confidence to know our eternity is completely secure. Jesus said no one can snatch even one of His sheep from His hand. Once we have Jesus as our Savior, we are now His sheep, and nothing can change that—not our own actions, our wrong choices, or what anyone else has to say or think about us. This is security the world cannot replicate. Consider the comfort of knowing this level of safety and security about eternity. Christ-followers are held secure by the Father in the same hand that created the world and no one and nothing can ever threaten that reality.


 Application: How should knowing that you are held safely in the Father's hand affect your daily life? What needs to change based on this reality?


Conclusion


In a world where everything expires from relationships to food, there is great comfort in knowing that the love of God is for anyone who believes, and it never runs out or goes bad. God promises eternal life to those who accept Jesus as Savior and choose salvation. He makes it clear that Jesus did the work for us to be saved and the offer is for anyone and everyone. Once we become Christ-followers, we receive eternal life with Him. In response, we are to invite everyone we know to experience the same salvation.

Another goal is living a righteous life. When we live like Jesus, others will be drawn to our faith. We will stand out from the world and call attention to who Jesus is in our lives. Paul wrote about how we can live righteous lives, and it starts with setting our minds and focus on heavenly things over things of the world. Because we are dead to sin and raised to new life in Christ, our lives should reflect that to everyone. What we focus on and set our minds on will drive the way we behave and make choices. When we set our minds on Jesus, we will become more like Him.

Further, God gives us security in our salvation. Jesus described this concept using the analogy of sheep with a shepherd. The sheep know their shepherd, and He loves and protects them. When we receive salvation and develop our relationship with Jesus, we come to know Him and recognize His voice. Jesus said no one and nothing can ever snatch us from His hand. Eternal security is a defining factor of our faith. Once we surrender our lives to Christ, we have Him forever.

 Who do you know who needs to receive Jesus as Savior?
How will you share with them?

 What do you need to do differently to move toward righteousness as you follow Jesus?

 How does knowing you are secure for eternity affect the way you live today? What will you do differently in light of this reality?

Here's How to Become a Christ-Follower:

Read the following verses and ask after each one: "What does this say to me?"

- **All have sinned:** Romans 3:23 & 1 John 1:8
- **The wages of sin:** Romans 6:23 & John 3:18
- **But while we were sinners, salvation was provided:** Romans 5:8
- **Become a Christ-follower:** Romans 10:9-10 Confess and Believe

Accepting Christ is Just the Beginning:

Next Steps:

- Publicly profess your faith by being baptized (Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 3:21; Romans 6:4).
- Join a church which follows the Bible, where you can grow in your faith through prayer, Bible study and fellowship with other Christians.
- Get involved in groups for encouragement and accountability.
- Begin a daily personal worship experience with God where you study the Bible and pray.
- Share with others what Jesus has done for you. Tell your story (Romans 10:14; Matthew 28:19-20).
- Begin to live for God (Romans 12:1-2, 9-18; James 1:19-27).



FOR NEXT WEEK

You Will Be My Witnesses

Main Passages

- Acts 1:1-8

Session Outline

1. Final Moments (Acts 1:1-3)
2. Final Instructions (Acts 1:4-5)
3. Final Promise (Acts 1:6-8)

Memorize

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

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