

I. Our earthly bodies are temporary. (1) For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. At death Paul is telling us that as this tabernacle dies we have a new tabernacle to move into. **Philippians 1:20-21** For our conversation, is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: ²¹ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. The Bible doesn't clearly tell us what our new heavenly bodies will look like only that they will be different.

II. Our heavenly bodies will be immortal. (2-4) For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: ³ If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. ⁴ For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. The future promises a body without sin that never gets old or dies. No more funerals, no more separation caused by death.

III. We have the promise of Heaven which is a place of paradise. (1-2) And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. The great theme of it all is life. There is the river of life. This reminds me of the living water of the Spirit of God and of the living Word. The tree of life is the sustaining life. The leaves contribute to the physical well-being of all who are in heaven. There is no sickness.

IV. Heaven is an eternity of joy and life. Revelation 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. Jesus will wipe away all our tears. No more guilt or suffering as a result of sin. No sorrow, or pain, or tears.

V. Our greatest promise is that we will spend eternity with Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: ⁷ (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) ⁸ We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Paul knew that at death he was going to be with the Lord. He even says I am willing to be absent from the body so I can be with the Lord. **Philippians 1:21-23** For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. ²² But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. ²³ For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Notice he says to die is gain and it is better to depart this life because it means being with Christ. Clearly Paul has an eternal perspective. Jesus tells us in **John 14:1-3** Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also. Don't be troubled about death you will not be alone. He is with us when we go through the valleys of the shadow of death and He is us with when we pass from life to death to life eternal. Did He not say I will never leave thee nor forsake thee? Many of you folks know my Aunt Peaches. She was a dear saint who loved the Lord. The last several times we talked she was ready to go home to be with Jesus. The most wonderful reality of

heaven is that it is where we will be able to look into eyes of our Lord. . The Bible gives us even more hope. **Romans 8:14-17** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. ¹⁵ For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. ¹⁶ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: ¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. Notice the declaration that because I am led by the Spirit I am a son of God. Not the son but a son I'm one of the family. From an eternal perspective it means I am assured of heaven. I'm like that orphan that world had beat up and God said son you need a family. Come be a part of mine. The Spirit of adoption lets me know what those verses mean. It means I have a heavenly Father that loves me, I have a Savior who died on a cross and I have the Holy Spirit who lets me know God is with me carrying my burden. **Keep your Fork** *There was a woman who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and was given 3 months to live. As she began getting her things "in order," she called her pastor and asked for him to come to her house to discuss certain aspects of her final wishes. She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service, what scriptures she wanted read, and what dress she wanted to be buried in. She also requested to be buried with her favorite Bible in her left hand. Everything was in order and as the pastor was preparing to leave, the woman suddenly remembered one final request that was very important to her. "Please Pastor, just one more thing," she said excitedly. "Sure, What is it?" was the pastor's reply. "This is very important to me," the woman continued... "I want to be buried holding a fork in my right hand." The pastor gazed at the woman, with a loss for words. "That surprises you, doesn't it?" the woman asked. The pastor replied "Well to be quite honest, I'm puzzled by the request." The woman explained. "You see, Pastor, in all my years of attending church socials and potluck dinners, I remember that when the dishes were being cleared after the main course, someone would inevitably lean over to me and say, 'Keep your Fork'. It was my favorite part because I knew that something better was coming, like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie. Something wonderful, and with substance to end the great meal." The pastor listened intently and a smile came upon his face. The woman continued, "So, I just want people to see me there in the casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder....'What's with the fork?'... Then I want you to tell them: "Keep your Fork...the best is yet to come". The pastor's eyes welled up with tears of joy as he hugged the woman good-bye. He knew that this would be one of the last times that he would see her before her death. But he also knew that the woman had a better grasp of Heaven than he did. She KNEW and trusted that the best was yet to come. At the funeral, everyone that walked by the woman's casket saw her wearing a beautiful dress with her favorite Bible held in her left hand and a fork held in her right hand. Over and over the pastor heard people ask the question, "Why is she holding a fork?" and his smile began to get larger and brighter each time. During his message, the pastor told the people about the conversation that he had with the woman shortly before she died. He explained the fork and what it symbolized to her. The Pastor told everyone how he could not stop thinking about the fork and how he hoped that they would not be able to stop thinking about it either.*