

Forever and Our Relationships

Romans 8: 20-25

Galatians 5: 13-18

Romans 13: 8-12

Living in Eternity's Light

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3: 1-4)

Only 2 possibilities; 2 mindsets

- above / below
- heaven / earth
- Above: Christ is seated at God's right hand
- Below: Satan's territory
- Above: eternal
- Below: temporary

Heavenly or Earthly focus determines our ...

- Attitude toward God
- Attitude toward Wealth & Possessions
- **Perception of People & Relationships**
- Attitude toward Pleasure & Pain
- Commitment to a Lifestyle of Purity

Suffering from “eternity amnesia”?

- in the mundane-ness of our everyday lives we forget that we are all just pilgrims and strangers here
- we forget that we have souls that will never die



What kind of world do we live in?

- ...the creation was subjected to frustration (Rom. 8: 20)
- ...the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay (8: 21)
- ...the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time (8:22)
- a “BROKEN” world

What kind of people live in this broken world?

- subjected to frustration?
- in bondage to decay?
- groaning as in the pain of childbirth?
- “BROKEN” people?
- YES. “BROKEN” people

What kind of relationships can we expect from “broken” people living in a “broken” world?

How about followers of Jesus Christ ?

■ And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. (Rom. 8: 23-24; NLT)

Fellow believers we are in relationships with

- For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. (Galatians 5: 13; NLT)
- Use freedom to satisfy sinful nature
- Use freedom to serve one another in love

Fellow believers we are in relationships with

■ 14 For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” 15 But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another.

(Galatians 5: 14-15; NLT)

- “Love neighbor as self”
- “Bite and devour one another”

This side of forever ...

- God had arranged for us to live as broken people with other broken people in a broken world
- God uses the messiness of our relationships to transform us by His grace
- “If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probably explanation is that we were made for another world.” – C.S. Lewis

■ “As we begin to realize that in this broken world we cannot look for reliable hope horizontally, we are at the edge of what we were designed to do: hope in God. And as we begin to place our hope in God, we get connected to the promise of eternity, where all that is broken will be fixed and made new again. And as we do this, we look at life in a radically new way. We no longer ask the broken people, places, and things to be the source of our hope. We know they can’t be, because they are broken and in need of renewal just like we are.”

– Paul Tripp, *Forever*; Zondervan, 2011, p. 100

FOREVER reminds us of where we are living

- All relationships exist in a broken world in need of God's redemption
- Perfectly happy, predictable, and problem-free relationships not possible here
- God's children in the process of being redeemed and re-formed (hearts being changed)
- On the other side, we will be radically different people than we once were

Believers will be radically different when Christ returns

- 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)

FOREVER tells us where our hope and rest are to be found

- Our hope and rest are to be found vertically and not horizontally
- “vertical hope and rest” = confidence in the presence, promises and provisions of God

FOREVER calls us to patience and grace in our relationships

- God's primary goal in our relationships is not personal happiness, but personal transformation
- Happy is good. Holy is better. Through becoming more holy, we gain joy.
- *Sacred Marriage: What If God Designed Marriage to Make Us Holy More Than to Make Us Happy?* by Gary Thomas

2 truths about transformation

- Everyone needs it
- Usually a process

In light of these two realities ...

- We need patience and grace in our relationships
- Forgiveness - the secret to successful relationships
- Difficulties and disappointments are not a waste
- The person I can change is myself, not the other person

FOREVER invites us not to settle for less

- God will not stop until everything broken by the fall is completely restored
- We need this same “dissatisfaction”
- Work to change what needs to change in our relationships rather than learn to live with dysfunction

Our present relationships ...

- destination or preparation?

What we have learned about **FOREVER** and our relationships

- FOREVER reminds us of where we are living
- FOREVER tells us where our hope and rest are to be found
- FOREVER calls us to patience and grace in our relationships
- FOREVER invites us not to settle for less

8 Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law.⁹ For the commandments ... are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself."¹⁰ Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law.

11 This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. (Rom. 13: 8-12; NLT)

Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.

(1 Cor. 13: 13; NLT)