

# **WORTH EVERYTHING**

***'Your love is better than life.'***

**(Psalm 63:3)**

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To Grace Nicholas, '*a shining star.*'  
(Philippians 2:15)

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## 1. Introduction

I remember when I was six years old and saying goodbye to a friend. Our family was moving country. We had everything packed and the car engine running. This buddy came running out and handed me his prized keychain as a gift. I knew it was his favorite of all time – a little Lego man on a chain. Our friendship meant more to him than his favorite thing, so he gave me the thing to make sure I knew that.

Jesus had an amazing experience like this one time. It was shortly before his death, and a woman named Mary sensed this. Jesus had meant a lot to this woman; he had forgiven her sins and had healed her brother. When this woman sensed that Jesus was going to soon leave this world, she took a jar of perfume worth one year's wages and poured it on him as a gift. She did this in front of his disciples – his most dedicated followers and believers – but they did not understand. They spoke against her, saying it was a waste. But Jesus spoke *for* her, and gave back to her a powerful promise and reward: ***'What she has done is a beautiful thing! And wherever the gospel is preached, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.'*** (Mark 14:9)

In this short book we look at what God has taught us and shown us about true treasure...

## 2. This World We Live In

This world is a lonely place. This life is hard. Just surviving takes all we got – hauling out of bed early in the morning, getting dressed and ready for the day, studies or work or both; money is tight; job interviews, some good jobs, some bad jobs; relationships, marriage, kids. God said it would be hard. He said this was because of our sin. The story goes like this...

God made people and put them in a perfect, beautiful world to live forever. Waterfalls, joy, peace, laughter, the sun high in the sky every morning and the land stretched out before us to explore and enjoy. It was heaven on earth. Or really, earth just was heaven. There was no death, sadness, tiredness, fear. Everything and everyone were perfect.

But God made people 'real'. He made them in his own image, so they had choice and free will. Any true and healthy relationship is a choice on both sides, a two-way street. Sadly, people chose to do things and reach for things that God said not to. We turned our backs on God, our Creator. We said, *'Thank you for life, for existence, but we want more!'*<sup>1</sup>

What we did not realize – and often still do not realize – is that there is no more beyond God. There is only death. It is as if you were on a ship,

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1-3

looking at the beautiful sunset on the sea, and decided you wanted more of this sunset, this experience, so you dived off the ship and started swimming towards the sunset. You would drown. When we chase beauty as we see it, rather than receive beauty as God gives it, we go to our death.

Because of our sin, the land is cursed, and life comes to an end. Here is what God said:

***‘Cursed is the ground because of your sin; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you. Only by hard work you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.’***

(Genesis 3:17-19)

For now we live in a battlefield. It’s true. There is so much darkness in every area of life that we lock doors, watch where we go, look over our shoulders, get security cameras, get guard dogs, get guns, etc. And that’s just to stay safe from people! There’s also sickness we have to watch out for, and weather, and accidents. And then, of course, there is the **‘painful toil’** just to survive, to pay bills, keep a roof overhead and some food on the table.

I don’t mean to be depressing here. Seriously! I’m just keeping it real, because unless we are

honest about this world we live in, the promises of Jesus make no sense. Jesus brought us *'good news'* (that is what the word 'gospel' means); but good news is only good if we are clear about the bad news. Well, the bad news is our sin, is death, and is the world we live in now.

OK, we're clear on the bad news. We get it. We feel it. Now let's talk about the *'good news'*, the new world – new kingdom and life - that Jesus offers us...

### 3. A Whole New World

Jesus – **‘God with us’**<sup>1</sup> – came to earth. He literally stepped down from heaven to earth. He put feet on the ground.

**‘Jesus made himself nothing and became human.’** (Philippians 2:6-7)

The prophets – thousands of years before - said God would do this one day, and he did.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus coming to earth was like a rescue boat coming to a ship lost at sea. It was like a firefighter pulling a person out of a window on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor when the whole building was in flames. It was like an army storming a camp and rescuing hostages. Jesus himself put it this way:

**‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to set prisoners free, to rescue the abused...’**  
(Luke 4:18)

The one advantage of feeling the pressure and the hardship of this life, is that Jesus will really mean something to you - his rescue, his words, his Spirit. For this reason Jesus said,

**‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those**

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 7:14/Matthew 1:23

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 9:1-7; Job 19:25-27; Isaiah 53



***who mourn, for they will be comforted...'***

(Matthew 5:1-12)

Jesus offers us a completely new reality! A new reality that starts now, and will go on forever. He offers us a whole new world. The first step is by faith, and is a spiritual step through the door of Jesus himself. Let's focus on this doorway for a minute, and our step through it; because without stepping through this door, well, there is no entering this new world.

***'Jesus said, 'I am the door, and anyone who comes through me will be saved, and they will come in and go out and find new life.'***

(John 10:9)

Jesus is the door that God has given us, so we can be saved from our sin and from death. We go through this door with a heart decision. We decide to turn away from our sin (this is called 'repentance'). If there are things in our life that are sinful, wrong, we do need to decide to stop them, turn away from them, go the other way. You see, turning away from our sin is a practical way to turn *to* Jesus. It is the same turn. It is the same step of faith. A simple prayer can mark the moment. You can read and whisper this prayer to Jesus right now, if you want to. If it is what your heart is saying, then it is your prayer:

***Dear Jesus, I want to be rescued by you. I want to be free from my sin. I want to live***

***forever in your kingdom. I believe in you, and please help me to turn away from sin in my life as I follow you. Amen.***

If your heart prayed this prayer, then you are now God's child, and you are saved from sin and from death for all eternity. Jesus put it this way:

***'Anyone who believes me and comes to me, has eternal life and their sins are forgiven. They have crossed over from death to life!'***  
(John 4:24)

You are now a ***'new creation'***, and God has given you a ***'new heart and a new spirit.'***<sup>1</sup>

You have come to Jesus, which means you have gone through the ***'door'*** of God. You are saved.

Jesus himself told us that this door of God would also be a door to his new kingdom, his new world and reality. He said, ***'you will come in and go out and find new life.'*** You are now part of a new kingdom – the kingdom of God. So although you still live here in this broken world, well, you are a ***'citizen of heaven.'***<sup>2</sup> You now belong to another world, another reality, where Jesus is King. You are part of a whole new world!

In the next chapter we will talk a little more about

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ezekiel 36:26

<sup>2</sup> Philippians 3:20

this new kingdom that you are part of, and what our mission is while we live out the rest of our time here on earth.

## 4. The Mission

People here on earth work hard just to survive. Survival – and success and comfort here on earth – become most people’s mission in life. They live in this kingdom and for this kingdom. Nothing else.

But we are followers of Jesus, and he has given us a new kingdom, a new world, a new future beyond the grave. Our life does not start and end here on earth, because Jesus has rescued us from sin and death. Our life now goes on for all eternity. We live for a while in this earthly kingdom, but we belong to the kingdom of God. And for our time here on earth, Jesus has given us a much greater mission than just survival. And this mission has two parts: (1) To bring heaven to earth, and (2) To bring earth to heaven. Let’s talk about both of these parts of our mission:

### Mission Part One: Bringing Heaven to Earth:

One day the disciples of Jesus asked him how to pray. He gave them an example of a prayer (that we now call *‘The Lord’s Prayer’*). One line of that short prayer says this: ***‘Our Father in heaven... may your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’*** (Matthew 6:9-13)

Jesus is telling us to pray – and to work for – his

kingdom in heaven to come to earth. How? Well, Jesus is primarily king of hearts. He wants people to believe in him and be saved. So we pray for this, and we also 'live' this. We make part one of our mission to bring heaven to earth, in other words, to bring Jesus to people, and to their lives here and now.

When we bring Jesus to the heart of a person here in this broken world, the light of God goes on in their life. There is forgiveness of sin, and healing. This changes their life here on earth. They taste heaven here and now. They feel the Spirit of God and can see his power in their heart, mind, work, home and community. This is heaven come down! And we all want to grow in this. We want more of Christ here on the earth. We want him to drive out darkness from this dark land. So we call heaven down. We pray and live, ***'Your kingdom come...'***

Mission part one, therefore, is to bring Jesus to people so that there is change in their lives and in this world.

### Mission Part Two: Bringing Earth to Heaven:

We all know – and are told in Scripture – that this world in its current form will not last. In fact, we are told that one day God will burn everything and rebuild.<sup>1</sup> This is not bad news, but great news! It simply means that at the end of a long

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Peter 3:11; Revelation 21:1-5

run, when history hits the finish line, God is going to clear the rubble and make the earth brand new, like it was in the beginning – a paradise garden.

So while we bring Jesus to people here on earth – and encourage them to build their lives around him – we also encourage people to live their lives with their focus on heaven. Do life here, but with your eyes on heaven there.

Paul puts it this way:

***‘We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.’***

(2 Corinthians 4:18)

Take this situation as an example: If you were saving money to buy a house, but had to rent and live somewhere for ten years in order to save up.

OK, while you are renting, you are still going to try to make your rental a home, a place of comfort and encouragement. You are going to invest in it, not fully, but partially, as you prepare and focus on your future and permanent home.

This is a bit like how we do the mission of Jesus. We are passing through here, and we want people to crown Jesus as king in their hearts. And while they are still here, we want people to

experience him now – in their lives, relationships, money and homes. However, as followers of Jesus, we all have our future, permanent and perfect home in heaven. So while bringing Jesus into our temporary world for now, we are also believing in him and following him to our future home in heaven. We set our eyes on heaven, on the unseen. Heaven is our focal point, our future. In this sense we are bringing earth to heaven.

***‘Jesus said, ‘My Father’s house has many rooms. I am going to prepare a place for you. When I have it ready for you, I will come and get you and take you there.’ (John 14:1-3)***

We are told that Abraham lived his life with eyes on the next life. ***‘Abraham was looking forward to the city with foundations whose architect and builder is God.’ (Hebrews 11:10)***

Peter tells us that our inheritance is stored up for us in heaven. Jesus himself tells us that when his followers die, that same day they will be with him in heaven.<sup>1</sup>

So in summary, part one of our mission here on earth is to bring heaven to earth by bringing Jesus to people, and then encouraging people to bring the Spirit of God into their everyday life.

Part two of our mission is to focus on heaven

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 1:4; Luke 23:43

that comes after we die, and in that sense bring earth to heaven. We do this by encouraging people to live this life, investing in the next one.

***'On that final day our work will be shown for what it truly is...'*** (1 Corinthians 3:13)



## 5. True Treasure

Jesus once told this very short parable, only one verse long:

***'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.'*** (Matthew 13:44)

Every now and again – not all the time – Jesus would speak about the 'worth' of finding him and following him. The parable above is an example of that. He told another one just like it, about finding a pearl.

Jesus was gentle, not demanding. He was God in the flesh<sup>1</sup>, the one who created us and gave us free will. He wants us to choose him back. For this reason, Jesus did not pressure people to follow him. However, Jesus knew his own worth, and he knew that when we find him, we find something worth everything.

Jesus modeled this for us also, in his own life. He valued true treasure, and he was living for heaven, not earth. So he never 'cashed in', so to speak. He invested here so that he would reap a reward there.

One story that really impacts me is in John chapter four. There Jesus meets a lady at a well.

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<sup>1</sup> John 1:1,14; Isaiah 9:6; Colossians 2:9

She is a Samaritan and he was a Jew. These people groups basically did not get along, did not respect each other. However, in this case, Jesus spoke kindly to this woman, and also showed her his miraculous power (he knew about her life without her telling him). This woman ran back into her village and told people that she had found the Savior. This village welcomed Jesus in, and he stayed there for two days. At the end of the two days this is what the people said:

***'We have heard for ourselves and now we know that Jesus is the Savior of the world.'***

(John 4:42)

At this point, with a whole village believing in Jesus, he decided to leave and move on. He spent only two days with them, even though a large number of them believed in him. Look at what he did *not* do: He did not stay, invest more time, power and influence into and over this group; he did not build a Headquarters for outreach to Samaritans and try to raise funds... Basically, he did not cash in on his popularity, his support, and try to build ministry on it, build success on it. Rather he came, testified, saw breakthrough and salvations, and then moved on. This is totally opposite to what we as humans do when we have success in our missions. We find it very hard to 'bank' our work, our success, for God's reward in the next life. We want reward now, and we want it from people, and we want it for this life.

But Jesus knew that the only real reward he could trust, the only one that means anything in the long term, is the reward – the judgment call – of God. When we stand before God, and give account for our life, what he gives back is the only reward that will last and that is true. Jesus was content to live faithfully here, but receive his reward *there*. God's blessing then was worth everything now.

The ultimate demonstration of this, and example to us, was Jesus giving up his own life for something more. Even his life was something he would give up for greater reward. The treasure of knowing God, being in God's plan and mission and kingdom was worth everything to Christ. And he is our model to follow.

Peter tells us that our faith is worth more than gold. Jesus told us – those of us that see Christ for who he is – that our eyes were blessed because they could see what most people cannot see.<sup>1</sup> This is you! You see and know that Jesus is Lord of life, King of the universe, God in the flesh. You have called on him and he now lives in you. This is everything! God's love is in you, and we are told that **'God's love is better than life.'** (Psalm 63:3)

Now let me say it, some people have got this wrong. They go too far. They try to deal with the treasure of Jesus in their own strength, their own

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<sup>1</sup> 1Peter1:7; Matthew 13:16

intelligence, and they get it wrong. They start to get legalistic and even lose joy in life. They start to think that if Jesus is worth everything, then this life can't really be worth anything. I have met people that have been caught in this deception, and lose the will to invest in this life, to even enjoy this life. But that is wrong! We have seen that Jesus himself told us to pray and work to bring heaven to earth. We are not supposed to put this life on pause while we wait for it to be set on fire. Nope! That is not what Jesus taught, what Jesus lived, or how his Spirit moves in our spirit.

For this reason it is very important to stay in the Scriptures, and stay close to the Spirit of God through love, worship and prayer. This keeps us balanced the way Jesus was, keeps us healthy and keeps joy flowing through our veins here and now while we pull heaven to earth.

And yet, like we saw with Mary spilling a year's wages of perfume on Jesus, there is a time and place where the treasure of Christ cuts across life here. And it is beautiful! It is glorious and powerful and aromatic. And Jesus says, 'Yes!' to the act of worship. It is prophetic, and joy spills through the land around it. This is of the Spirit of God.

So Jesus is our treasure worth everything. He had to sacrifice his own life to stay in this mission of God, and many throughout history

have had big sacrifices to make. But day to day, the general sacrifice for most of us is faithfulness to Jesus, quiet worship, honest testimony, joy, peace, kindness. We are told that these are the fruits of the Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Stay in the Word. You will see that Jesus never made things depressing or sad. He always pushed fear away from a person and said, **‘Do not fear!’** The call of Christ to take hold of Christ is a deep one, a sweet one, full of the Spirit of God with heaven itself in our sight. Joy. Peace. Hope. Childlike excitement. It is in this Spirit of truth that Jesus calls us to keep pounding, keep walking, and not lose the vision, the mission, and the reward just around the corner!

***‘Jesus called the crowd to him and said: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet lose their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, I will be ashamed of them when I come in my Father’s glory with the holy angels.’ (Mark 8:34-38)***

Let’s be strong! Let’s be true. But even as

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<sup>1</sup> Galatians 5:22-23

soldiers, as committed followers, let's allow Jesus to also give us his peace, his joy, his laughter, his protection.

## 6. Heaven

Let's end this short book on a high! And it is the truth of where we are going, and what we should be keeping in our sights at all times: Heaven.

Look at this amazing description of it, just a glimpse:

***'Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.'*** (Revelation 22:1-5)

And here is more insight:

***'And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.'***

***He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. Jesus who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!'***  
(Revelation 21:1-5)

Just look at this picture of the city of heaven! A crystal clear river running through the city, trees with many kinds of fruit on them... We are on our way there! Is there a type of exhilarating experience you enjoy here in the world, like oceans or waterfalls or valleys, skies, food, thrill, chill, etc.? Feel free to imagine these things in perfection up ahead in heaven, and design your own landscape. Your creative mind and heart come from God, and he will give you even more than you can imagine, hope for, or even ***'ask for'***! (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Jesus has promised you a room in heaven (John 14:1-3), a reward, a city, a family of God, friends, joy, love and laughter. Let's hold on to this ***'joy set before us'***<sup>1</sup> and so hold on to Christ!

***'Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.'*** (Psalm 37:3-4)

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 12:1-2



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