

The Joy of Being With Christ - John Bramhall

Have you ever considered that in a very few words, the Scriptures describe the blessedness of those who have gone to be with Christ? Yet these few words are complete in their revelation to convey to our hearts the eternal blessedness of it! WHERE ARE THEY? is a question these Scriptures answer, in regard to any loved ones who have gone before. Two words sufficiently cover this, found in Philippians 1:23 "With Christ." Do you remember Peter writing (in his second Epistle, chapter 1 18) of being "with Him on the holy mount?" On that occasion he expressed the great joy of that privilege saying, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." He was right, for the glory of Christ's presence is unequalled. Then David the Psalmist declares: "In Thy presence is fullness of joy" (Ps. 16:11). Does not Colossians 3:4 tell us that the blessedness of departed saints forevermore is to be "with HIM in glory?" How sweetly must the words of Jesus have fallen on the dying thief's ear when He answered: "Today shalt thou be WITH ME in paradise." What blessedness: WITH CHRIST!

WHAT IS IT LIKE? would be another good question to raise. Another two words fully describe it in the same Philippian chapter and verse, saying: "far better." There is suggestion that the glory of being with Christ has no comparison on earth, In contrast to all earthly things below, the privilege of being in His glorious presence is supremely higher than any earthly honor The Revised Version of the Scriptures renders the words as meaning: "very far better." J. N. Darby's translation says: "very much better." Moffatt's rendering is: "far the best." The saints gone before are really enjoying a grand time in His presence: not one longs to be back here on earth. Their present circumstances they answer are "far better" It almost makes one's heart long to be with them, does it not?

HOW DO THEY FEEL? is not amiss to ask. I believe they would answer in the words of 2 Corinthians 5 :8--"We are willing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." The Revised Version renders the word "present" as meaning "At Home." Oh, they answer, "We are at Home!" Young's Translation suggests: To be among one's own people, to be "at home." So another two words would tell of their blessedness "at home." Not one is a stranger to the other, although they have never met before. What a company of happy people in His presence, all saying, "at home." No hunger nor thirst in that home: no scorching trials of earth; no tears of grief and pain: They are "at home," the place of "living fountains of waters." Read Revelation 7:16, 17

ARE THEY EMPLOYED? should be next considered. 'What is the answer? Two words again cover it: "serving Christ." Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple" (Rev. 7 :15). "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face." Yes, service and worship is their constant occupation. Better service than ever done on earth: fuller adoration of His blessed Person and Work than ever known below. How glorious to be thus employed in eternity! Will it not be grand when we also enter upon our heavenly employment in His eternal Presence! Eight words, but oh how full of meaning: "with Christ" "far better" "at home" "serving Christ"-but let us remember that we who are still here should find encouragement to go on faithfully for Him from the words of Hebrews 10:37, which say: "For yet a very little while He that comes will come, and will not delay" (J. N. D.). Then will be the re-union morning, in the land where partings shall never be known, for we shall all be "with Christ" forever. "So shall we ever be with the Lord." If my reader has no assurance of being re-united to those who are now with Christ, permit me to explain God's way of salvation to you:

1. You MUST acknowledge before God the truth of His Word declaring you to be a lost, guilty sinner in His sight. This is a universal fact, "for ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God – Rom. 3 :23. See Isa 53 :6.
2. You MUST acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ, God's beloved Son, is the only Saviour for you, having died on the Cross to shed His precious blood for your sins. "In Christ, we have redemption, through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" – Eph. 1:7. See Isa. 53 :5, John 1:29 and John 3:16.
3. You MUST accept by faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, as your personal Lord and Saviour. for "as many as received HIM, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name" – John 1:12. See Romans 10:9. Will you do this NOW? Then you will be assured by God's Word that you will enter with those gone before, into "The Joy of Being With Christ".

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