

The Parish VISITOR



"Be Transformed...By the renewing of your minds."- Romans 12:2 - NIV

Christ Presbyterian Church of Hollywood
4011 Clinton St., Los Angeles, CA 90004-2298
The REV. STEPHEN M. BAROLDY, Pastor

cpchollywood.org

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your pastor writes

By REV. STEPHEN M. BAROLDY



Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to all our Parish Visitor readers!

This morning we continue our series on the book of Ephesians. There are so many incredible truths contained in this book. I look forward to sharing them with you.

*In Heavenly Places, Eph 1:3,
Originally given on 070322 at CPC*

Introduction: The title of today's message is "In heavenly places."

A *Christianity Today* article, from November of 2021, reported some fascinating statistics about Americans belief in heaven. The article, quoting Pew Research statistics, revealed 73% of all Americans believe in some form of heaven.¹ 73%! Does that surprise you?

The number goes up to 96% for evangelical Christians. And it goes down

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JOIN US AT


**CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF HOLLYWOOD**

In addition to the in-person worship, we continue to stream the service on Zoom for those unable to attend in-person.

The invitation for joining the service can be found at the events page on our website at cpchollywood.org.

You can send in your prayer requests PRIOR to the service via email to sbaroldy@gmail.com or text at 323-202-5078.

**Christ Presbyterian Church of Hollywood is an intentional,
healing community; proclaiming and demonstrating the wholeness
of life offered in JESUS CHRIST.**



"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places."
(EPHESIANS 1:3, ESV)

to 88% of those in mainline denominations. The number drops to 37% for those not affiliated with a church.

This 37% number lines up with another statistic, from Ignite America, which shows 61% of Americans between the ages of 18-35 doubt the existence of God. 61%! That is troubling.

Those who doubt the existence of God, in this age group, doubled in just one generation.² So, if you doubt the existence of God you also doubt the reality of heaven.

Belief in God and belief in heaven are tied together. This morning, I want to talk about the reality of the "heavenly places" and what it means for us believers.

Heavenly places in the book of Ephesians: Paul uses the phrase "in the heavenly places" five times in the book of Ephesians. Let's quickly read them.

Eph. 1:3, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places."* (Ephesians 1:3, ESV)

Eph. 1:20, *"[God] raised him [Jesus] from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places."* (Ephesians 1:20, ESV)

Eph. 2:6, God made us alive with Christ *"and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,"* (Ephesians 2:6, ESV)

Eph. 3:10, God makes known the mystery of the gospel *"through the church . . . to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places."* (Ephesians 3:10, ESV)

And, finally, Eph. 6:12, *"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."* (Ephesians 6:12, ESV)

These scriptures affirm that "heavenly places" are part of the biblical understanding of reality. Paul tells us God raised Jesus from the dead and seated Jesus at his right hand in this location called the heavenly places.

And, as we've talked about before, when we come to faith in Jesus Christ, God makes us alive with Christ, God makes us alive in union with Christ, and seats us, with Christ, in this location of the heavenly places.

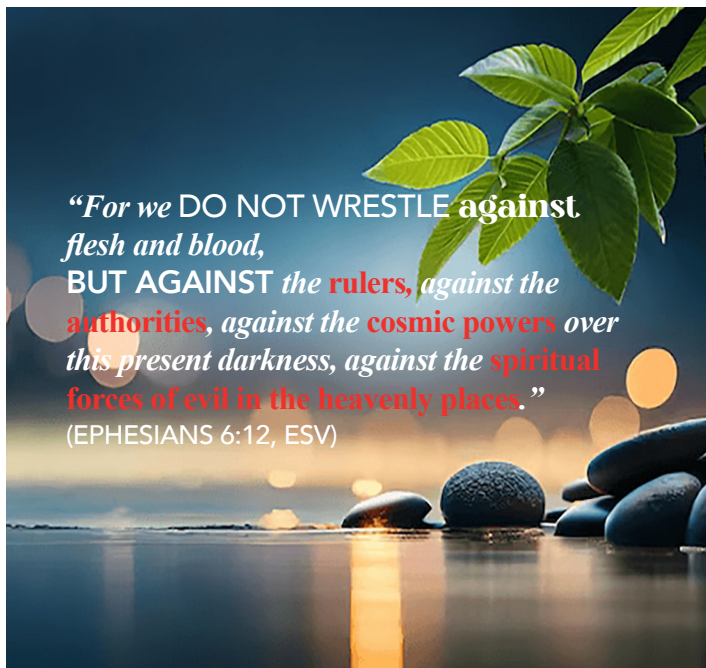
So, we are here on earth and also seated with Christ in the heavenly places. And, as we learned from the book of the Revelation, the heavenly places, specifically the New Jerusalem, is our eternal home.

Then, in Eph. 3:10, Paul tells us there are "rulers and authorities" "in the heavenly places." These rulers and authorities are spiritual forces of evil.

These forces of evil now know the mystery of the gospel through the presence of the church on earth, and through the teaching of the church on earth.

This is something I haven't thought about before. Paul tells us, we, as the church, impact these "rulers and authorities" in the heavenly places.

These rulers and authorities receive revelation about Jesus' ultimate victory over them through the churches proclamation of the gospel and our teaching of the word of God. In this way, the church on earth impacts the evil powers in the



“For we DO NOT WRESTLE against flesh and blood, BUT AGAINST the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”
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heavenly places. This is powerful encouragement to proclaim the word of God, isn't it?

Paul also tells us we believers wrestle with these rulers and authorities and other spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. So, these beings in the heavenly places impact us here on earth. They try to turn us away from God.

And of course, in Eph 1:3, Paul tells us God has blessed us, in Christ, with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. These blessings can manifest here on earth through prayer.

This is what Jesus teaches us in the Lord's prayer. We pray that God's kingdom come, that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. So, again, we see the blessings of the heavenly places impact us here on earth.

Now, notice, Paul talks about the heavenly places, plural. The bible talks about three heavens.

The first heaven is the sky and atmosphere we can see. The second heaven is space and the universe we can't see. And, the third heaven is where God the Father, and the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ reside. This is also where we will reside when God calls us home.

Satan and his angels roam between the earth and the second heaven because they were kicked out of the third heaven when they rebelled against God. (Rev. chapter 12.)

Here, in the book of Ephesians, Paul gives revelation that life on earth is influenced by life in the heavenly places. And, life in the heavenly places is also influenced by life on earth. The bottom line is scripture teaches the heavenly places are a real location.

So, let me ask you. Do you believe in this location called "the heavenly places? Do you believe in heaven? Are you praying the Lord's prayer and asking for the spiritual blessings of the heavenly places to manifest here on earth?

By faith we understand the heavenly places are real:

Now, as we study the heavenly places, there is another biblical principle we need to talk about.

We find it in Heb. 11:3, which says, *“By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”* (Hebrews 11:3, ESV)

Let's look at the first four words of this verse, *“By faith we understand.”* This is a biblical truth our culture and our natural mind struggles with.

Popular culture would say “by science we understand.” Atheists would say “by books we understand, or, by human knowledge we understand.” Those who watched a lot of afternoon television would say, “by Oprah we understand.”

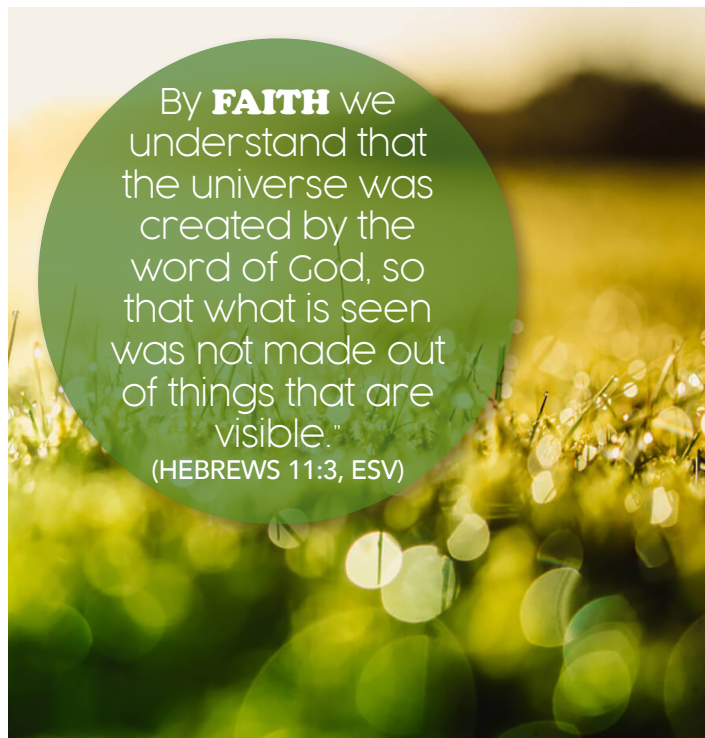
Popular culture, and the natural mind, narrows “understanding” of reality to two dimensions. First, they would say we understand reality through the dimension of self. They would say our senses and our mind lead us to understanding.

And, second, they would say we understand reality through the dimension of the physical world, which includes the physical universe and other people. These are things which science can analyze and test.

Popular culture and the natural mind would say when hope, or health, or healing is needed, it comes from one of these two dimensions. And, it is limited to **only** these dimensions. The biblical view of reality is multidimensional. It includes dimensions that cannot be seen.

The biblical view of reality would include the eternal, living God, expressed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It would include the kingdom of God where God's will is done. And, it would include the location, or the dimension of “the heavenly places.

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By **FAITH** we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”
(HEBREWS 11:3, ESV)



“NOW FAITH IS THE ASSURANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE CONVICTION OF THINGS NOT SEEN.”

(Hebrews 11:1, ESV)

These three dimensions, the living God, the kingdom of God, and the heavenly places, are part of a biblical understanding of reality. And, because they can't be seen, we, Christians, accept them by faith.

Heb. 11:3 tells us “*By faith we understand.*” The word “understand” here denotes an understanding that does **not** come through the physical senses. Instead, this understanding comes through the spirit into the mind. It is an understanding that comes through faith.

So, what is faith? Heb. 11:1 tells us “*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*” (Hebrews 11:1, ESV)

The *New Spirit Filled Life Bible* interprets this verse this way. First, faith is assurance of God's promises contained in his word. Faith is relying on the truth God always fulfills the promises contained in his word.

And, second, faith is the title deed of things hoped for, the confidence in things not seen.³ So, when we hope for things revealed in God's word, when we trust that God always keeps his promises, we own the title deed of those things.

We own them and it is only a matter of timing for them to manifest. So, in union with Jesus Christ, we own all the spiritual blessings in the heavenly places. And through faith and prayer, we are assured they will eventually manifest.

Now, Rom. 10:17 tells us, “*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*” (Romans 10:17, ESV) Our faith is not blind faith. It is not simply wishing something is true. Faith comes from hearing and relying on the word of God. Faith comes from our assurance the word of God is true and reliable.

And, faith always results in some kind of action. Hebrews, chapter 11, tells us by faith, Noah built the ark far inland believing God would bring a flood.

It tells us, by faith, Abraham left Ur, traveling to unknown lands, not knowing where God was taking him. He believed God's promises of a lasting, heavenly, country and city, designed and built by God himself. And we studied this heavenly city in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22.

Both Noah and Abraham believed God's word and acted on God's word **before** they received the blessings promised by God. With Noah, the flood did come and he and his family were saved because of his faith and obedience.

Abraham is now with Jesus in the heavenly places waiting for Jesus Christ to return to usher in the new heavens and the new earth and the New Jerusalem, the city he looked forward to when he acted in faith. So, by faith, we understand spiritual things, including things we cannot see like the heavenly places.

God created the heavens and the earth: One final point you might not have thought about. Once there was no heaven. Once there was only the Triune God. God did not need heaven for God to exist. Yet, then, in Gen. 1:1 we are told, “*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*” (Genesis 1:1, ESV)

Heaven is God's idea. God created the heavens, just like he created the earth. Both the heavens and the earth are real, created realities. And almost always, the bible links them together. Genesis 1:1 says, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And, then, Revelation 21 tells us when Jesus comes back, there will be a new heaven and a new earth.



“So FAITH COMES FROM HEARING, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

(ROMANS 10:17, ESV)



“And WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM,
for whoever would draw near to God must believe that
he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

(HEBREWS 11:6, ESV)

So, heaven and earth are real, created realities. And, we need to live our Christian life today with both heaven and earth in mind.

Application: So, how does the reality of the heavenly places inform our Christian life now?

First, the reality of the heavenly places gives us hope. In Christ, we understand we are citizens of heaven right now. We are seated with Christ in the heavenly places right now. And we understand heaven is our future home.

Understanding heaven is a real place gives us hope. It strengthens our perseverance. We can persevere through the hard times here on earth because we know the best is yet to come.

We keep faith and persevere because we understand the hardships of this life shall pass. Because we understand we will have all the blessings of heaven for all eternity. This gives us hope. And encourages us on our walk here on earth. And we need hope and encouragement, don't we?

Next, the reality of heaven motivates us. Paul wrote Ephesians from a prison cell. Even though he was in Rome, in jail, he knew he was also seated with Christ in the heavenly places. Paul was limited in what he could do for Jesus, from prison, yet he did what he could. Paul wrote letters. Paul gave us revelation he had received from the Holy Spirit.

Understanding our glorious future motivates us now to do what we can for Jesus. No matter what our current situation, we do what we can. We can praise, we can pray, we can give. This stores up for us treasure in heaven.

Next, faith in heaven pleases God. Heb. 11:6 says, “*And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever*

would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6, ESV)

God created the heavenly places. And even though we can't see the heavenly places, our faith in heaven pleases God. God created heaven as the place we will reside with him for all eternity.

Heaven is his gift to us, and it pleases God when we believe him and thank him. Also, we saw that those who don't believe in the existence of God also don't believe in heaven. Telling people what scripture says about heaven points people to God.

And finally our prayers on earth, the teaching of the word of God on earth, impacts heaven. Our prayers help restrain evil. Without the prayers of the saints, Lords knows what would be happening on earth now. So, let's have faith. Let's let our belief in heaven continue to motivate us and encourage us. Amen!

See you next month,
Pastor Steve

1. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2021/november/heaven-hell-universalism-reincarnation-pew-afterlife-survey.html>

2. <https://igniteamerica.com/certified-stats/what-do-young-adults-believe/>

3. Hayford, Jack W. Exec. Ed., *New Spirit Filled Life Bible*, (Thomas Nelson, 2002), notes on Heb. 11:1, p. 1741.



“You (GOD) keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.”

(IS. 26:3)



LET US PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER:

Brian Albriton is under care at a SNF. He is in a lot of physical pain. Denise, his wife, is under the strain of advocacy for Brian as well as being in much emotional pain.

Susan Rosal has not had a job since January. Finances are critical.

That Alice Pourrat (Pastor Steve’s granddaughter) would grow. She is 5-year-old and has not grown for a year due to mediations addressing ulcerative colitis.

Morsan McSweeney asks that we pray for her grandchildren, Avery, Tristan, Kaden, and Lillian, to have self-control. That they would take personal responsibility for their own choices and actions. For herself, to not only trust GOD for finances, strength, wisdom, rest and renewal but also for a clear personal “calling” into the future.

Alison Puzio (Young Life Hollywood Director who’s ministry we support) is taking a 3-month medical leave.

Matty Miranda, Alison’s assistant, is stepping in to cover for Alison’s absence for Young Life activities.

Joan Janecek was moved into to another care facility. The dementia symptoms have become more severe and she is refusing to walk. Except in the middle of the night when she likes to get up

and roam.

Irene Mayeda’s ankle is not healing due to the heavy lifting of caring for Harumi.

Janet Nozaki has taken a couple of falls.

Philip Nozaki, Janet’s son is dealing with cancer.

The Israelite saints and Palestinian saints that find themselves in the midst of a geopolitical war.

Our school age children that are being taught lies about their sex.

LET US REMEMBER ALL THOSE WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN CARE FACILITIES:

Yuri Sangen, Brian Albriton, Joan Janecek, Barbara Kashiwagi, Kimi Fujitani, Karen Koranye, Frank Morimoto, Janet Nozaki, Jean Sakai, Irene Mayeda caring for her mother Harumi. Each one has extended their greetings and send their love to each of us in the CPC community.

LET US PRAY FOR ALL CPC SAINTS PHILIPPIANS 1:9-11:

9 “I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, 11being filled with the fruit of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of GOD.”

(Simone October 2023)

CPC Family celebrates Pastor Steve's birthday



"A family that celebrates together STAYS TOGETHER."

FINANCIAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2023



	<u>OCT. 2023</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Receipts	\$ 10,857	\$ 114,826
Disbursements	\$ 12,440	\$ 131,311
Increase (Deficit)	(\$ 1,582)	(\$ 16,485)

Gifts & Offering



We are grateful for your continued generosity in supporting our ministry.

Please consider sending a gift or donation to:

**Christ Presbyterian Church of Hollywood
4011 Clinton Street, Los Angeles, CA 90004**

"Per a suggestion from a reader, we are looking into adding a payment link to our newsletter to make it easier to contribute."

HOW CAN WE
pray
FOR YOU?

If you have prayer requests, you can send them via email or text PRIOR to our service each Sunday.

My email is sbaroldy@gmail.com.

You can text me at
323-202-5078.

The Cheerful Giver

⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully[a] will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency[b] in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

- 2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-8

CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOLLYWOOD



**SUNDAYS at 11:00 A.M.
IN-PERSON OR ON ZOOM**

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/384758031?pwd=ZnEySjBjL1VkUmhiTWRCREdmZVhJZz09>

Meeting ID: 384 758 031
Password: 351955
One tap mobile
+16699006833,,384758031# US (San Jose)
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