

INTRO

- What was something you were afraid of as a child but no longer?
- What is “heaven on earth” for you?

READ, REFLECT & RESPOND

We come to the end of The Creed by looking at a topic many don't like to discuss: Death and the Afterlife.

Qu: compare healthy and unhealthy ways of dealing with death. How do you deal with it?

What is the Christian's hope in death and the afterlife? **“I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.”**

OUR HOPE: BODILY RESURRECTION

Read Phil 3:20-21. *What does this scripture say we await Jesus to do for us?*

Death is our enemy through the Fall resulting in the unintended separation of body and soul. However, Jesus conquered death through his bodily resurrection and therefore provides the hope for our future resurrection.

Qu: what is the significance of bodily resurrection? What will our bodies be like if they are to be “like Jesus' glorious body”?

Our confession of a bodily resurrection makes a statement that connects this world to the next.

OUR HOPE: LIFE EVERLASTING

Read Rev 21:1-5.

Qu: how has heaven been described to you? Was it a compelling or confusing vision? Explain.

Genesis 1-2 describe creation as God intended. Revelation 21-22 describe a re-creation. There is incredible similarity and continuity between the beginning and end of Scripture. Can you identify some? In Rev 21-22, heaven & earth are

reunited; the fullness of God's presence is with humanity; there is the absence of all evil, sin, Satan and death.

Many Christians believe a disembodied heaven in the sky is our future hope. However, Scripture is really clear that our future hope is an embodied existence in an entirely renewed earth. Life everlasting looks a lot like renewed bodies for a renewed creation meaning we will continue to live, learn, work and play with God and each other eternally.

Qu: why is it significant to connect the accounts of creation and re-creation?

HOW NOW SHALL WE LIVE?

In light of our future hope as Christians, how should this impact our everyday lives?

Read 1 Peter 1:3-5. This passage says God has caused us to be born again (new creation has begun in us) to a living hope through Jesus (Jesus is the first fruits of new creation) to an inheritance kept in heaven for us. Therefore, we are to live as good news people in tension:

- Avoiding the extremes of fatalism and triumphalism;
- Trusting the good news of what happened;
- Anticipating the good news of what will happen;
- Joining Jesus now in the renewal of all things.

In other words, we are called to pray for and build God's kingdom on earth. Our hope is heaven coming to earth, not us leaving earth.

Qu: what was encouraging/challenging in today's discussion? In light of all this, how is God leading you to respond?

PRAY

- Spend some time in prayer together and for one another.