**Our Final Destination**

**The Word**

Read together Revelation 7:9-17

**The Big Idea**

Heaven is a very real place, and when we focus on our eternal home, it should impact the way we live our daily lives here.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. What stood out to you most from Pastor Adrian and Ophelia’s story?

2. How does the idea of an eternity that is embodied (we have resurrection bodies living in a very real physical place) inspire or challenge your view of eternity?

3. On Sunday this C.S. Lewis quote was referenced: “If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.” Consider your own life: how much does eternity factor into your imagination and what impact does that have on your daily life? What impact sould you like it to have on your daily life?

4. Take some time to walk through some of the images of Revelation 7:9-17. What images stand out to you most and what questions are raised for you?

**Sermon outline**

I. The story of Adrian and Ophelia DeVisser

A. 2013 Cancer Diagnosis

 1. Ophelia was given one month to live and Adrian was angry with God

2. Many Bible characters expressed profound anger and disappointment in God

3. A word from pastor and friend: You have being dealing in the 5 senses, but you need to deal in the sixth sense: faith

4. Mark 5:25-29: Through her faith the Lord healed the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years.

5. Ps 30:2-3: Ophelia was cancer free!

 B. Ophelia’s final days

1. Her final days were moments of communion with her family and worship and intimacy with the Lord

2. Just as Steven saw the heavens opened when he was being stoned, it was as if she had a window opened to heaven in her final days.

II. Heaven is our hope

A. The urgency for the world. Many other religions do not have the dominant theme of being saved by grace alone. So many people in the world are moving towards a Christ-less eternity.

B. Our citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20)

C. The paradise of God

1. Jesus tells the thief on the cross that he will be with him in “paradise” (Lk 23:43). Paradise is a Persian world meaning a well-watered garden. It was used to describe the great walled gardens of the Persian king, Cyrus.

2. In Genesis 3:22-24, God sent Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden, and ever since we haven’t had access to the garden of God.

3. But in Rev 2:7 we discover God’s promise that “to the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

4. It’s not so much that Eden was destroyed, but it was rather our ability to live in Eden that was destroyed. But we will have access to God’s paradise once again in eternity

5. Paradise is an actual physical place where God and his people live together, surrounded by physical beauty enjoying great pleasures and happiness.

 D. Platonism and Christianity

1. Plato the Greek philosopher, believed that material things, including the human body and the earth. Are evil, while immaterial things such as the soul and Heaven are good. This view is called Platonism. The Christian church highly influenced by Platonism through the teaching of Plato came to embrace the spiritual view that human spirits are better off without bodies and that heaven is a disembodied state. They rejected the notion of Heaven as a physical realm and spiritualized or entirely neglected the biblical teaching of resurrected people inhabiting heaven

 2. But Jesus was raised with a very real physical body.

 3. In John 14:1-3 Jesus describes a place/home God is preparing.

III. Live with heaven in mind

 A. 1 Peter 2:11-12

 1. Live as aliens and strangers in the world

 2. Abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul

 3. Live such good lives among the pagans

B. Col 3:1-4: Seek the things that are above, not the things of earth

C. Consider the story of the two twins in the womb talking to each other and dreading what might happen after nine months. But in actuality, they had a mom and dad preparing a home for them eager to welcome them into the real adventure of life

D. “If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.” - C.S. Lewis