

## **Thank You for Tomorrow**

An 85-year-old couple

Having been married almost 60 years

Suddenly die in an automobile accident.

Both were in good health

Due to the wife's incessant push to eat healthy.

They wake up to find themselves at the Pearly Gates.

St Peter takes them to see their new home.

They oohed and aahed over the beauty of it.

The husband asked St Peter what will it cost him.

"It's free!" "This is Heaven."

Next they went to see the championship golf course

Back behind their new home.

They're given daily golfing privileges

And each week the course changes

Depicting another great golf course of Earth.

The husband asked what that was going to cost.

"Remember this is Heaven, you play for free."

Next they went to the clubhouse and saw the lunch buffet

With the finest display of food and wine.

"Would you look at this," the husband said.

"And how much is the buffet?"

St Peter replied, "Don't you understand? It's all free!"

He looked over the buffet and asked St Peter

"Where are all the low-fat and low-cholesterol foods?"

St Pete replied:

"Well, that's the best part . . .

## Thank You for Tomorrow

You can eat as much as you like  
Of whatever you like  
And it will never adversely affect you!"

The husband looked over at his wife and said,  
"You and your bran muffins . . .  
I could have been here years ago!"

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There're a lot of jokes that relate to the Pearly Gates  
It's proof that people have heaven on their mind.

In fact, the majority of people believe in an afterlife.

80% of Americans believe in some kind of life after death  
Though only 56% believe Christ as Savior is the way there.

Maybe imprinted on our DNA is a sense of immortality.

The Bible says as much:  
Ecclesiastes 3:11 declares that  
God has set eternity into people's hearts.

J. B. Meyer agrees:

*God has set Eternity in our heart  
And man's infinite capacity cannot be filled or satisfied  
With the things of time and sense.*

Randy Acorn, the author of *Heaven*, elaborates:

*The sense that we will live forever somewhere  
Has shaped every civilization in human history.*

Australian aborigines pictured heaven  
As a distant island beyond the western horizon.

The early Finns thought it a distant island in the east!

Mexicans, Peruvians, and Polynesians believed  
That they went to the sun after death.

## Thank You for Tomorrow

Native Americans believed that, in the afterlife,  
 Their spirits would hunt the spirits of the buffalo.

In the pyramids of Egypt  
 The embalmed bodies had maps placed beside them  
 To guide them into the future world.

The Romans believed the righteous would have a picnic  
 While their horse grazed in nearby pastures.

*Although these depictions of the afterlife differ  
 The unifying testimony of the human heart in history  
 Is belief in life after death.  
 Anthropological evidence suggests every culture  
 Has a God-given, innate sense of the eternal  
 That this world is not all there is.*

This is more than just wishful thinking.

Indeed there is something intuitive  
 Concerning life beyond the grave.

St Augustine's famous line comes to mind: *"Thou hast made us  
 for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its  
 rest in thee."*

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During the more difficult times in life  
 When things become unbearable  
 We long for Heaven . . .

A place where wrongs are righted  
 Sorrows turn to joy  
 Pain transforms to pleasure.

A place where, yes, we can eat as much as we please.

We long for a day when our vision clears  
 When we can see with brilliant clarity

## **Thank You for Tomorrow**

The things that our faith, love, and hope embraced  
While passing through this life.

We long for the day  
When we come face-to-face with Jesus Christ  
The author and perfecter of our faith.  
This is the scene in our Scripture Lesson today.

God has gathered the great multitude of people.

All celebrate their salvation.

It is a wonderful and powerful image.

People from all different walks of life  
Different in every way . . .  
Color, culture, ethnicity and language . . .

Things that once divided one another on earth  
Now are the very things to celebrate . . .

The rich and colorful diversity . . .  
All united, all in one voice praising God.

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A question is asked . . .  
*Who are these people,  
Where did they come from?*

*They have come out of the great tribulation.*

Biblical scholars vary on their understanding of this.

Many believe it is the time of great suffering  
That will come at the end of the ages.

Others believe it refers to the specific time and place . . .  
The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem  
By the Romans in 70 AD.

## Thank You for Tomorrow

Still others believe it refers to the suffering of believers  
 Throughout all the ages  
 Past, present and still to come.

Whichever way you look at it  
 Those gathered have come through terrific suffering.

They now stand before the presence of God  
 Something they have yearned for in life.

God will say to them . . .

As Paul writes in 2 Timothy 4:8  
*[You] have fought the good fight . . .*  
*[You] have finished the race . . .*  
*[You] have kept the faith . . .*

*Now there is in store for [you] the crown of righteousness  
 Which the Lord on THAT day will reward them.*

This is THAT day!

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Once there was a group of martyrs  
 Who arrived at the entrance to the Gates of Heaven.

The guardian at the gate asked them:  
*God has given you much  
 What gift have you brought Him?*

*Only our pain, said the martyrs  
 Nothing compared to the suffering of Christ  
 He experienced for our sake.*

*Yes, this is a good gift, said the guardian  
 And you are welcomed as comrades of the cross.*

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For many, life on earth has had its great tribulations.

Those who have suffered look forward  
 To the heavenly joy awaiting them.

## **Thank You for Tomorrow**

Those who have experienced great loss  
Those who suffered physical and emotional pain . . .

Those whom society has cast aside  
The homeless, the abused, the addicted  
Jesus says to you,

***Rejoice and be glad because great is your reward in heaven (Mt. 5:11-12).***

This passage is a message of hope for what is to come.

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Life on earth should focus on life on earth.

Our head should not be in the clouds.

Our calling, as Christians, is to follow Jesus  
Living out kingdom values on earth.

To reach out to those who are broken and in need  
To share the love of God in Jesus.

Our churches here on earth should reflect in microcosm  
The great multitude in Revelation  
With people from every walk of life  
Worshiping together shoulder to shoulder  
Arm in arm, as one in Christ.

But we must never lose sight of our destination.

We are kingdom bound!

Our life on earth a fleeting moment in endless time.

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For those of you who suffer  
Live your life in anticipation  
That soon and very soon  
God will wipe away your tears

**Thank You for Tomorrow**

That hunger and thirst, pain and sorrow will be no more.

Live your life with words of gratitude on your lips

Thanking the good Lord for the heavenly home

Awaiting those who have trusted in him.

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A story from Benjamin Reeves.

*He was just a little fellow. His mother had died when he was just a child. His father, in trying to be both mommy and daddy, had planned for a picnic.*

*The little boy had never been on a picnic. So they made plans, fixed their lunch, and packed the car.*

*It was time to go to bed. The little boy was too excited to sleep. He tossed and he turned. Finally he got out of bed and went into his father's room and woke him up.*

*The father asked what he was doing up. The little boy answered, "I can't sleep, Daddy, I'm too excited about tomorrow."*

*"Well, son," the father replied, "I'm sure you are and I know it'll be a great day. But it's not going to be great unless we get some sleep. So, why don't you go back down the hall, get back in bed and try to get a good night sleep.*

*So the little boy did just that but just about the time the father had drifted back to sleep the little boy came back to his father's room and woke him up.*

*The father was about to speak harshly to his little son until he saw the excitement in his eyes.*

*"What's the matter now, son?" said the father.*

*And the little boy answered,*

*"Daddy, I just want to thank you for tomorrow!"*

**Thank You for Tomorrow**

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We thank God our father for our eternal tomorrow.

From Sir Francis Drake, explorer and naval pioneer:

*Disturb us, Lord, when we are too pleased with ourselves; when our prayers have come true because we have dreamed too little; when we arrive safely because we have sailed too close to the shore.*

*Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of things we possess we have lost our thirst for the waters of life; having fallen in love with life, we have ceased to dream of eternity; and in our efforts to build a new Earth, we have allowed our vision of the new heaven to dim.*

*Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly, to venture on wider seas, where storms will show your mastery; where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.*

*We ask you to push back the horizons of our hopes; and to push us into the future in strength, courage, hope, and love.*

Our Heavenly Father

We thank you for our tomorrow

Through faith in the grace of our Lord

Jesus Christ in whose name we pray

Amen.