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!”

~~
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.”

~~

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
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.

~~
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!
~~
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.
~~

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.

~~
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.

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

Thank You for Tomorrow

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!”
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.