

What is Your Destination?

Sermon August 9, 2020

Scripture reading: Luke 16:19-31 & Roman 10:11-13

I like to watch an airplane taking off or flying high in the sky. I spent a length of time watching the plane, and picturing the people who are flying to their new destination.

My second oldest brother, Mike, lives in Newmarket. Every time when I visited them with my family, I was excited to drive by the Toronto airport. With one eye, I was watching the airplanes. I was quite happy to be in the traffic around the airport, because I had time to watch some planes flying so close to us. Sometimes my wife got annoyed because often I asked her: “Wow, did you see this one? That one? ... Wow, that was the biggest one!” My children were smiling at me, because I was amazed like a child.

Since the pandemic, it is not enjoyable to search the sky. In our area, you rarely see an airplane. It is not so enjoyable to drive around the airport, because you rarely see any airplanes. A week ago, my wife and I were driving to Huntsville for the weekend. I saw two airplanes and I right away mentioned those to my wife. Smiling, she said: “They made your day”.

I was excited when I heard about a new app, Flightradar24. If there is an airplane above you, you can check right away from where the plane is coming, what their destination is, and how high the plane is in that moment.

Have you ever wondered, looking up at the sky, how many planes were flying in the sky before the pandemic? According to the **Flightradar24**, there could be anywhere from 8,000 to almost 20,000 planes at any given moment. In 2019, there were 8.9 billion air passengers worldwide. People are moving towards their planned destinations.

I remember that, 20 years ago when I travelled regularly to Toronto to study for my Doctorate, Highway 401 was full in the morning and the traffic was very slow. These days, the traffic is steady. Everyone is going somewhere. Every plane, every car, every person who is moving has a destination. Everyone is going somewhere based on their plan they made.

This scripture reading, between the lines, made me to think about my final destination. Everybody has a final destination. Nobody will live forever on this earth. We all have a final and eternal destination.

Do you know where you are going? **Our Lord, Jesus Christ, who holds in His hand everything, taught that there are only two possible eternal destinations: heaven or hell.**

When I pronounce the word HEAVEN, my heart is rejoicing, but when I say the word HELL, my heart is shaking.

The topic of hell is one of the most hated doctrines in the Bible. Jesus said that we should not be afraid of hell, *“But rather fear God, who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.”* Matthew 10:28

Please STOP for a second, before you would judge me for this sentence. This information is not coming from me. It is coming from God, who created heaven and earth. It comes from God, who made this decision. It comes from God, who is bigger than I am. It comes from a caring and loving God, who is righteous but honest and lawful.

I have to say, it does not matter if we like His decision about two possible eternal destinations or not. Those still exist. It does not matter if you believe in heaven or hell, at the end of the road we will experience that they exist. God said that both are real and eternal, and both will be busy.

I want to stop here for a second, and I want to highlight that we cannot select amongst the Bible verses. We cannot say that I like this message and I will read it, or I don't like that one and I will jump over it.

As we studied Romans 8, we understood that WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD. Our dear Heavenly Father has chosen us to be His children, to live with Him, to rejoice in His protection, to enjoy His blessings. Jesus Christ, our Saviour, gave up His life on the cross, to pay for our redemption. He took upon Himself our weaknesses, our sin, and He made us clean and perfect. God looks upon us with favour because of Jesus. God promised that, because of Jesus' sacrifice, He has prepared an everlasting destination for His children. You and I have an awesome opportunity and possibility to mark HEAVEN as our final destination.

Once, the disciples asked Jesus about the way which takes us to heaven. Jesus said: *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* John 14:6

God did not create us as robots. God gave us wisdom, knowledge and free will to choose our direction. Please pay attention, that your final, eternal destination is your choice. YOU decide where you want to go.

God does not send anyone to hell, but people choose it. Nobody will arrive in heaven by accident. Jesus said: *“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”* Matthew 7:13-14

In Deuteronomy 30:19, God says: *“Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your children might live!”*

God gave us free will. Everyone is going somewhere, but you and I have to decide where that somewhere will be. Have you decided where you want to go?

But just deciding where we want to go is not enough. We have to **prepare** for our trip.

Based on a story, once court jester asked the king if he knows that one day he has to leave this earth. The king started to laugh: "Of course, we all have to go one day". Then the court jester continued: "Do you know your majesty, where you want to arrive at the end of your journey." With lots of confidence and a big smile the king said: "Of course, to heaven." The court jester did not give up: "Majesty, do you prepare yourself for that journey?" The king did not take this question very well. His smile froze on his face, as he slowly answered: "No".

Well, the court jester said, "You are a silly man your majesty. I never met a person before, who knows that he has to journey but he is not preparing himself for the journey. So, you are so silly that from now you should be the jester and I should be the King".

Also, we have to **pack**.

It's time to plan ahead, to get ready, to prepare for the time you will spend at your destination.

I read about a rich man who asked the Lord to let him take some of his possessions to heaven. After a long conversation, the Lord finally allowed him to take one suitcase. Since this man was very rich and invested all his money in gold, the man decided to fill the suitcase with gold. When he got to the gates, Peter, who has the key of heaven, told him he could not take anything with him. The man protested that the Lord told him he could bring one suitcase. Peter said, "Show me what you brought." The man opened the suitcase and showed Peter the gold. "Well," Peter said, "I guess you can go in but I don't understand why you brought pavement with you."

Your destination determines how you pack. If you might decide to make heaven your ultimate destination, you have to pack accordingly. Before you start to pack, I would like to give you some advice, based on what I learned in the Bible about heaven.

Don't pack tissues, since there is no crying in heaven. Don't pack any of your medication, since there is no pain in heaven. Don't pack snacks and water, because there is no hunger or thirst. Don't pack a book to read, because there is a crown waiting for you there to party. Don't pack a flashlight because there is no darkness. You won't need your watch because there is not time there. You won't need your laptop or cell phones because heaven is a place of rest from our work. And you won't need any money because heaven is all-inclusive.

Jesus said: "*Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal.*" Matthew 6:19-20

You cannot take any treasure with you, but you can send it there before you arrive. What did you send there already, or what are you sending ahead to enjoy when you get there?

As a next step we have to dress up.

"Be dressed for service and keep your lamps burning, as though you were waiting for your master to return from the wedding feast. Then you will be ready to open the door and let him in

the moment he arrives and knocks. The servants who are ready and waiting for his return will be rewarded...He may come in the middle of the night or just before dawn. But whenever He comes, he will reward the servants who are ready...you also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.” (Luke 12:35-38,40)

“No one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son Himself. Only the Father knows. And since you don’t know when that time will come, be on guard! Stay alert! The coming of the Son of Man can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. When he left home, he gave each of his employees instructions about the work they were to do, and he told the gatekeeper to watch for his return. You, too, must keep watch! For you don’t know when the master of the household will return...in the evening, at midnight, before dawn, or at daybreak. Don’t let him find you sleeping when he arrives without warning. I say to you what I say to everyone, Watch for Him!” (Mark 13:32-37)

So far we have decided where we want to go, we know that have to be prepared and packed and now we have to know the **direction**.

I know a couple who, decades ago after they moved to Canada, planned to drive from Toronto to an appointment here in Kitchener. They knew that the trip is about one hour. They took Highway 401 and were driving more than an hour but they did not see the KITCHENER sign. So they kept driving. Then they decided to stop in a parking area to get some information on how far Kitchener might be. They were just passing Oshawa when they realized that, for more than an hour, they were driving the opposite direction.

Deciding where to go is the first step. The second one is to prepare, the third one is to find the right direction.

Romans 10:13 says that *“Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved.”* Which means will find the right direction.

Departure is certain. Time of Departure is not. If we want to spend eternity in heaven, we have to stay ready for an on time departure. Everyone is going somewhere. Are you ready?