

# A Place Prepared for Life with Christ

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] John chapter 14, and we'll read verses 1 through 7 together.

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you?

That I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself. That where I am, you may be also.

And you know the way to where I am going. Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way? Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.

[ 1 : 0 8 ] Let's pray together. Lord, we again want to ask that your Spirit would help in the preaching of the Word. That it would be your words that are communicated.

Your truth. That you would be glorified. Lord, help us to focus upon these things in your Word. That it would be clear. Lord, we pray that we could rejoice in a resurrected Savior.

In whose name we pray. Amen. So our passage today is occurring after Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

And so we're only a few days removed from the cross. It's coming. He's headed that way. And Jesus has warned his disciples that he will be betrayed.

That some will deny him. even in one way or another he's communicated that he will die and so at that they're they're concerned they're worried this is their messiah jesus has been with them they've been with jesus and now he's warning them that he'll be taken away and so you see in the passage it begins with let not your hearts be troubled he's encouraging them of something that will give them hope as they think about jesus departing from them and as we look at the passage i want you to understand some of how we got here and we know that today we're celebrating jesus's resurrection and i picked a little bit of a strange passage for that because jesus is telling about what's going to take place after he's resurrected he's not yet gone to the cross we're really focusing on the ascension of jesus as part of that resurrected work but i want you to understand what's occurred so far we've seen as we studied through the book of exodus how man has sinned against god we saw the ten commandments and how none of us are able to keep god's law not even one of the commandments we have a positive requirement to each of the commandments that we're to do what's right and we have the negative prohibition that we're not to break god's commandments and yet we do we don't fulfill what we need to do we've sinned against god and so we come to jesus who comes now who's lived a perfect life and as i said he's now just a few days away from the cross but he's done for us what we could not do he lived a perfect life perfectly obeying all god's commands and he's going to be put to death not for his sins but the sins of his people so he's taken upon himself their sin and dying in their place and at the same time he is fulfilling for them the righteousness that they could never attain of themselves so jesus goes to the cross he accomplishes that work and we might imagine that could be the end of the story but the resurrection has its place the resurrection says to us that jesus accomplished the work that he set out to do it's almost as if it were the father's stamp of approval upon jesus's work he did pay for our sins he did conquer death we see that even in his ability to rise from the dead having borne our sins and yet he comes out triumphant from the grave and so we see the resurrection is part of the process we might say the work wasn't finished at the cross jesus needed to be resurrected and part of why jesus needed to be resurrected is because the work continues on now i want to be careful here we can say confidently that the atoning work of jesus the work that jesus did to pay for our sins has been once for all finished and completed we've looked at the tabernacle and the work of the priest you might have noticed what wasn't there in the tabernacle there was no place for the priest to sit down

because their work was never finished we've seen in hebrews they kept on over and over again day after day offering sacrifices they kept dying they couldn't continue on in the work but christ has accomplished once for all in his death the atonement for our sins and it says he sat down at the right hand of the father on the throne so jesus is seated that work is done but jesus is still continuing with the work we understand this when we talk about the ascended christ when we say he's at the right hand of the father what's the work that he's doing now i think we instantly think of he's interceding on our behalf he's continuing in his work

[ 6 : 01 ] as a high priest not for atonement but on our behalf to speak to the father so the atonement's completed but he's ascended to the right hand of the father he continues that work that work of intercession but also what we see in this passage is that work of preparing a place and i want us to think about the place that he's speaking of being prepared because i think it ties in with what we see or at least i'm attempting to tie it all together with everything we've seen the book of exodus last week we finished the book of exodus and now i want us to consider kind of a continuation of the story as we finish exodus the scene ends with the tabernacle has been built god in his glory has descended upon the tabernacle god's people are surrounding the tabernacle and god's presence is there in their midst and i said last week and we've looked at this along the way but this is the most glorious experience of god's people since the fall this is what man has been longing for that that they could dwell with god that god would be in their midst that there'd be that communion again but as we end that place in exodus with god's glory there in the tabernacle and the people are there we know that's not really the end is it in fact we've only finished the second book of the bible there's a lot more to come and they didn't achieve all that they longed for or god didn't grant to them all that they had longed for they want more of god and the reality is the people there of israel they want more of god and yet they don't want more of god and what i mean by that is they don't want to get too close to god he's there in the tabernacle but they cannot go into certain parts the priest can go in but even the priest not all the priests can go into the holy of holies only the high priest and that once a year so as we think about almost consistent consistent circles of getting closer and closer to god they're there they know god's there in their midst but they cannot get too close to him lest they die and so even though they're at a better place than anyone has been since the fall their longing is that they could dwell even closer to god that there'd be greater relationship greater communion with god than even what they're experiencing now and so if we were to continue on in the pentateuch the people long to enter into rest with god in the promised land god has promised in this land where he will dwell with them there'll be a permanent temple instead of a tabernacle will be larger god's presence will be there they can meet with him and they'll be in a land of rest and that sounds good and it's better than wandering in the wilderness even with the tabernacle and god in their presence but they want more i thought of c. s. lewis's words i'll quote him later but he said or a way of saying this is they long to go further up and further in right they wanted to get closer and closer to the presence of god i think even if we were to go a little bit further back than where we were in exodus we got to exodus because abraham was called out of his homeland by god to go and find a home in a new land and so god gives him this new home which is in the promised land later because of the famine we know god's people end up in egypt they spend 400 years as slaves there and we've seen in the book of uh etsus that god has rescued them from that slavery but why did abraham go in the first place hebrews 11 10 says that he abraham was looking forward to the city that has foundations who whose

designer and builder is god and so we're told the motivation for abraham to leave his home and to find a new home in the promised land wasn't the new home in the promised land he loaned for a house a home that was built by god abraham's eyes were fixed upon not the promised land not a house there but really his eyes were fixed upon heaven being in the presence of god a new city a new jerusalem before there was an old jerusalem his eyes were set upon that and so the promised land was not enough and we have evidence of that in god's word again from hebrews hebrews chapter 4 verses 6 through 11 since therefore it remains for some to enter it that's the rest spoken of the promised land and for the egyptians who were i'm sorry the israelites who are wandering in the wilderness it remains for some to enter into that rest and those who formerly received the good news or the gospel fell to enter in because of disobedience those that we're reading about that we've read about that we've studied in exodus they don't enter the promised land because of their own disobedience and sin it says again he appoints a certain day today saying through david so long afterward in the words already quoted today if you hear his voice do not harden your hearts

now that was the accusation against the egypt against the israelites they harden their hearts and therefore did not enter into the promised land but he continues on for if joshua had given them rest god would not have spoken of another day later on so then there remains a sabbath rest for the people of god for whoever's entered god's rest has also rested from his works as god did from his let us therefore strive to enter that rest so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience now that's a little bit complicated but what's being communicated in this passage is this god preached a gospel the good news to his people the israelites of the promised land of him dwelling with them but they rebelled against him they disobeyed they had hard hearts they had stiff necks and so they die in the wilderness and never get to enter in but the next generation goes in it's joshua who takes them into the promised land and the writer of hebrews is saying if that were the rest that abraham longed for that god's people longed for then there would be no talk of a future rest if it was all about the promised land i think even if we talk about in times things if it were all about just getting israel back and us reigning in jerusalem that he wouldn't have spoken of a future rest it's not about a specific land he's saying there's a rest that awaits god's people and the reality is we all long for that rest or if i were to tie it all together maybe even more clearly since the fall man has longed for what adam and eve enjoyed in the garden unhindered communion with god no sin that would compromise that or in any way break fellowship with god they want to be in god's presence and have the joy of being his presence and communion with him and i said we still long for that rest because joshua didn't provide it in the promised land david's still looking for it even though he's dwelling in jerusalem and the temple is in the process or soon will be built he's still longing for a future rest c.s lewis i told you i would quote him he speaks of this our desire for this rest he says there have been times when i think we do not desire heaven but more often i find myself wondering whether in our hearts or our heart of hearts we have ever desired anything else it is the secret signature of each soul the incommunicable and unappeasable won't the thing we desired before we met our wives or made our friends or chose our work in which we shall still desire on our deathbeds when the mind no longer knows wife or friend or work he said he's wanted just every time we didn't desire it and i think what he's getting at is even the fact that in everything else that we've ever pursued in this life what we long for was relationship with god and god has graciously given us hints of that and he mentions wife spouse marriage is one way he speaks to that union with christ and that joy that we're to have but in everything that we've saw everything that we pursued what we wanted was the joy of being in the presence of god we wanted the garden again or something even greater than what adam experienced in the garden in revelation 21 3 we have really the jesus has returned the new jerusalem and we read in revelation 21 3 and i heard a loud voice from the throne saying behold the dwelling place of god is with man he will dwell with them and they will be his people and god himself will be with them as their god and so that promise in the covenant that god would be our god that we will be his people that he will dwell with us we see fulfilled in the new earth in the new jerusalem jesus is there he will dwell with his people we will be his people and he will be our god and so as we look at our passage today we have to understand that that's part of what we see jesus accomplishing here look again at verses 2 and 3 of john 14 in my father's house are many rooms if it were not so would i have told you that i go to prepare a place for you and if i go and prepare a place for you i will come again and will take you to myself that where i am you may be also so what is this work that jesus is doing why is he going to prepare a place why is that important because we don't yet have that place we've longed for this we won't eden 2.0 right we want the new garden of eden we want to dwell in god's presence and we don't have it yet and so he's gone to prepare a place and notice even i think the emphasis is not on the place i think we get caught up on that well what's this place going to look like in my father's house are many rooms what does that mean right it's just one big i mean really we get caught up in all these questions of what it looks like i don't think that's the emphasis of the passage again in two and three we see would i have told you that i go to prepare a place for you and if i go and prepare a place for you i will come again and take you to myself that where i am you may be also and so i think the focus really is on not necessarily what the place is but for whom the place is for it's for us it's for you i go to prepare a place for you and so jesus is if i can say continued work is he's preparing a place for us and i'd argue even in terms of sanctification being conformed to the image of christ he's preparing a people for that place as well but he's preparing a place of rest for you in which you will be in the presence of god and know the joy of communion and being in his presence which really leads me to a third point it's not just that he's preparing a place but he's preparing a place where we would be with jesus we will dwell with god and so i said before we have

this desire for this rest but the rest isn't just we're not looking just to take a nap for eternity right some of you probably nap you find naps refreshing they provide rest but it's not that we long just for a nap or something we long for rest from our sins not dealing with our own corruption our own hearts that don't delight in what they should and delight in the things they should not but we long to be in the presence of god we long for christ that's that's our deepest desire when jesus gives the great commission he says to his people and behold i am with you always to the end of the age and so as we think about a desire to be with god jesus says i'm with you always to the end of the age and of course the age he's speaking of is this current age that we might call the church age the eschaton he says i'm with you to the end of the age now we know that's true through his holy spirit that he's given to us a little bit further in john jesus speaks of his ascension his going back to the father he tells his disciples who again are still upset because jesus is going to leave them he says nevertheless i tell you the truth it is to your advantage that i go away for if i do not go away the helper will not come to you but if i go i will send him to you and so as jesus ascends we see at pentecost the coming of the holy spirit and the holy spirit indwells believers so that each one of us is a temple of the lord god dwelling in us by his spirit and so we have a deeper communion with god than the israelites had in the wilderness than the israelites enjoyed in the promised land in the temple we have something far greater and realize this jesus's words mean we have something far greater than the disciples enjoyed when they walked with jesus on this earth we have a spirit indwelling us but we like the israelites we cry out because it's not enough we still want more further in we long for eternity with jesus and again and apart from our sin a deeper and greater communion if we look at our passage we see that jesus is returning he's telling them he's going to go to the cross he's going to die he will ascend to the father but he will return if i go and prepare a place for you i will come again and will take you to myself that where i am you may be also and so i will come again jesus is returning and we see there that he's returning for a specific purpose that i will take you to myself that where i am you may be also so jesus's return is one in which all those who have trust in him will be gathered to him to dwell in his presence that we may be with him first thessalonians 4 16 through 17 for the lord himself will

descend from heaven with a cry of command with the voice of an archangel and with the sound of the trumpet of god and the dead in christ will rise first then we who are alive who are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the lord in the air and so we will be always with the lord and so jesus is returning and when jesus returns it's not as though he's going to come back one time take a few come back again he's coming once and when he comes again those who are in christ who are dead will be resurrected their bodies will be glorified those who are on the earth who have trusted in christ will be gathered up to him and it says and we'll be with him always that's what we're longing for or another way of putting this paul says in colossians 3 4 when christ who is your life appears then you also will appear with him in glory think about even that word in glory and what we saw at the end of the book of exodus the glory of god descended upon the tabernacle but moses can't even go in there it's almost as if god has to hit the dimmer switch before the high priest can come in once a year moses is scared to go into that presence and what we're told is that when christ returns we will be brought into his glory no dimmer switch the full glory of the presence of god and we read in our passage that we will be with him forever so as disciples are looking at things it appears to them that they're losing jesus but what's the reality they are in fact gaining him forever the work's continuing going he's going to prepare a place for them that they may be with him forever or as jesus says that where i am you may be also we have to understand this is better than anything else that we've known second corinthians 5 8 you may remember paul contemplates his own death and what god may have in store for him he says yes we are a good courage and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the lord it's a better place to be he's saying i have great courage even to face death for the sake of christ because it would be better to be in god's presence and so jesus came not just to save us right that is where we often focus on jesus is atoning work that he came to save us but he also came that he might have a relationship with us right it's not as though he just plucked us out of the fire and said all right be on your way he's saving us so that we may dwell with him that we may be fit for the kingdom sanctified eventually glorified that he might prepare a place that's fit for us and him to dwell together forever further in our chapter here john 14 in verse 23 jesus answered him if anyone loves me he will keep my word and my father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him and so here he speaks of a different way making his home with us this is what man has been longing for that god would make his home with us and everything that we've seen in exodus the movement from bondage to glory the glory that we

see at the end of the book of exodus is a foretaste of the reality of what will happen in eternity it's a shadow of that reality it's glorious it's greater than all that they experienced before [ 26 : 20 ] it's better than anything that abraham knew or the patriarchs this is a great experience and yet it's a shadow of the reality it's meant to tell you what it will be like one day when christ returns and brings us into his presence in eternity one commentator tim chester said this he said light the most holy place inside the tabernacle the holy of holies the city that john sees in the book of revelation is a perfect cube this means there is no longer a special sacred place now the entire city is a most holy place we no longer visit god in his tabernacle we inhabit the tabernacle the whole earth is god's house in which we dwell with him john says i did not see a temple in the city because the lord god almighty and the lamb are its temple there's no one place that is a tabernacle or temple everywhere is the temple because god is present everywhere and so that's how we understand this new earth that will come when christ returns the description of the city is identical to that of the holy of holies and so now not one high priest not even the one person jesus christ who entered into the holy of holies and the veil was torn but now the holy of holies encompasses everywhere where god's people are we will dwell we will live this place prepared for us that we will abide in is itself the new and the greater the real holy of holies in god's presence forever a place that the high priest had to prepare for and could go in once a year a place that moses was not allowed into even though he was in the cloud he saw god's glory there is a greater glory still and we will dwell there with god in that glory forever so if these things are true if jesus has done this work how does this apply to us how might we think about this well my hope is that our response would be similar to that of the disciples look back at our passage beginning in verse four and you know the way to where i'm going thomas said to him lord we do not know where you are going how can we know the way jesus said to him i am the way and the truth and the life no one comes to the father except through me so if we've seen this reality notice how thomas at least probably speaking the first one to speak up for the disciples he wants to know how do we get there that's where i want to be and as i said before i think for all of us in this room whether you trust in christ or not that is true for all of us we know that there's a longing that god has created in us that nothing in this life nothing in this world nothing in creation can satisfy because god's made us for another world and now jesus has just said i'm going to prepare that place for you and you know how to get there and we ought to be asking you do we right how do i get there i want to be there give me that gps or the directions for that how do i make it to that place and jesus gives the answer he says i am the way and the truth and the life no one comes to the father except through me there is one way to enter into that place one way that we might dwell in the presence of god forever it's faith it's trust in the person of jesus christ

to believe in jesus is to have life think of john 3 16 for god so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever should believe in him would have life eternal life should not perish but have eternal life and so believing in him whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life believing in him is to have life or again in the same gospel john 11 25 jesus speaking really at lazarus's funeral he said to her i am the resurrection and the life whoever believes in me though he die yet shall he live and so how is it that one day we might be resurrected from death that we might have a glorified body and be in the presence of the lord forever whoever believes in me though he die yet shall he live it's belief in jesus and so we are absolutely and completely dependent upon christ for redemptive truth and for eternal life without christ there can be no redemption there can be no eternal life and therefore there is no other way to the father no way that we can get to him apart from faith in jesus christ peter in acts 4 when he's preaching his sermon verse 12 he says and there is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved and so if we see the reality that jesus has gone to prepare a place and if your desire is to be there there's one way of getting there believing in jesus christ having faith in what we spoke of before knowing that you are a sinner before a holy god that one sin and if any of you have not committed one sin talk to me afterwards one sin is enough to keep us from god's presence the wages of sin is death and that jesus came and died for that sin so that we though we physically die would be spiritually alive that we would have life with him forever and so he resurrected and so he ascended to the right hand of the father to prepare that place for us and so i want to encourage you be sure that you're going to enter into that rest now i said already thomas's question was really how do i get there there's that desire in us but there's also the warning and i'll go back to that passage in hebrews chapter 4 that we looked at earlier the last few verses verses 9 through 11 remember this is the passage talking about the rest that joshua gave in the promised land and how it wasn't

enough and so there's a continued longing for rest and even our celebration of the lord's day is our remembering a day of rest because there's coming a future rest and so he said all this he talked about that generation who died in the wilderness really those who we just read about in exodus and we read in hebrews 4 9 through 11 so then there remains a sabbath rest for the people of god for whoever has entered god's rest has also rested from his works as god did from his let us therefore strive to enter that rest so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience and so in the book of acts we've seen some of the rebellion already against god we saw the golden calf we saw them complaining about the food that they received that pattern will continue when it comes time to enter the promised land they're scared of the people they forget about god they're scared of the people and they don't enter in and so there's that whole generation that dies in the wilderness having lived close to god god's presence there among them and yet they don't enter into the promised land and i think of all of you and i think that warning is there for us all of us who are here today can say in some sense we relate to the israelites in that day we're close now to the presence of god god meets with us in our worship he's spirit and dwells many of us in this room and yet there will be some of us who will die in the wilderness and never enter into that rest and so what is the warning for us that we see in hebrews strive therefore to enter into that rest so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience and so the warning or the encouragement for us is make sure that you enter into that rest and again we just saw what is the way that we enter into that rest it's faith in jesus christ and so don't leave here today not knowing if you have that faith not knowing whether or not you will enter into that rest and then if you do know that if you have trust in jesus christ then i want to encourage you what a blessing it is to know our destiny know where we're headed where we will end up it changes our life it changes how we live what we do i think philippians 3:20 says this very succinctly but our citizenship is in heaven and from it we await the savior the lord jesus christ and so if you're a christian today if you have faith in jesus christ if you've gone the way if you trust in the truth if you have the life through jesus christ then the reality is that already we are citizens of heaven but we're not there yet and we know that and so we wander in this world much like the israelites in the wilderness knowing that this is in our home and we long for that rest but we're encouraged in a way that even that first generation wasn't we're already citizens of that land and so therefore we await a savior the lord jesus christ our longing is come lord jesus come quickly because we want christ's return that he might bring us into that place that we might dwell in his presence now i know this maybe isn't all of you but maybe some of you are like this what happens when you prepare for a trip right i'm the one in our house that does most of the planning and you guys can pray with pray for me because uh yeah the way i do it you should be worried about me there are times i prepared notebooks of here's what we're gonna do this day and this day and this day we're gonna stay here we're gonna eat here everything all planned out i'm oftentimes more excited about the planning than i am the actual experience of the vacation but i think all of us we know we're going somewhere we begin to plan maybe it's what am i going to pack now that's not usually my primary concern but others in my house are more concerned about that what am i going to pack what am i bringing with me and so your thoughts begin to focus upon this future trip that you're going on and i don't want to demean this in any way but i want to encourage you if we know where we're headed what should our thoughts be about where should our minds be focused where will we spend eternity and how does that compare to where we are now and yet our focus is so much upon the here and now the circumstances around us what happens to us what people say what they do to us where should our focus be where our citizenship is it should be focused on our homeland

and so we're encouraged in colossians 3:1 through 4 if then you have been raised with christ and so there's a resurrection christ has been raised we've been united with him so we've been raised with him seat the things above where christ is seated at the right hand of god he's ascended and so where ought we to be ascended there with him focus upon where christ is at the right hand of god he says set your mind on things that are above not on the things that are on earth for you have died and your life is hidden with christ in god when christ who is your life appears then you also will appear with him in glory let's pray together dear heavenly father we thank you that even though in the garden we stand against you and lord even though over and over again in our lives we stand against you even this day lord we have we will sin against you lord we thank you that you have sent your son to die for our sins to redeem us to live the perfect righteous life that we could never live so that we can rest from our works as you did in the creation and that we could trust in the finished work of our savior jesus christ and lord we thank you that because of christ we one day will enter

into your presence lord not just in a spiritual sense when we die now but when christ returns and he brings with them he ushers in the new earth and the new heavens that we will dwell there in the temple and the tabernacle and the holy of holies in your presence lord help us to see that everything else that we seek in life the things that we take joy in many of them are your good gifts to us to point us to this reality lord others are pale and sinful substitutes but lord let us not be content with these things may we set our sights on things above may we know our citizenship in heaven and lord we pray if any don't know you if they have not trust in christ lord that they would put their faith in him that they would strive to enter into that rest we pray this in christ name you you