

Leroy “Deacon” Brooks Memorial “Heaven Is Real”

John 14:1-3

Deacon was a man who loved the Lord Jesus Christ and invited him to be his Savior and Lord as a young man back in 1968. It was May of 1968 that sent Deacon to a Billy Graham Crusade that came to Portland May 17 - 26, 1968. At one of those meetings, at the invitation of Billy Graham and the leading of The Holy Spirit, Deacon came forward and accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. He would never be the same.

As a result of his faith and, according to the testimony of scripture, Deacon is now experiencing the truths that I'm going to share with you from God's Word. God's Word tells us that Deacon is now in heaven with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and he is waiting for us to join him. The question is, will you join him after this life is over? You see, heaven is not an automatic option for all of us. It first involves a choice of surrender. A choice of surrender that Deacon made back at that Billy Graham meeting in 1968. A choice of surrender, that if he were here right now, he would implore you make as well.

And because of his decision made in simple faith back in May of 1968, Deacon is not here. He is in heaven with his Lord and Savior. On that peaceful day, last Saturday, November 4, 2023, at 3:00pm in the afternoon, when Deacon took his last breath of earthly air, his lungs were immediately filled with the air of heaven. We know this because the Bible tells us that the moment we are absent from our body is the moment we are present with the Lord.

Deacon is experiencing the reality of heaven and is waiting for us to join him. The question we should all ask ourselves is . . . when we die, will we join him? It's a question worth asking and pondering for the next several quiet moments.

Heaven is a real place.

Heaven is mentioned over 700 times throughout The Old and New Testaments of The Bible. Here is just a glimpse of what it will be like from The Apostle John.

Revelation 21:1 - 4, *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 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. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”*

Jesus talked about heaven.

During his last meal with his disciples, just hours before his death by crucifixion, here is what Jesus wanted his friends to be assured of.

John 14:1-3, *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”*

The Disciples wanted to go to heaven.

John 14:5-6, *“Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*

Jesus made it clear that the only way to heaven is through him. He is not “a” way to heaven. He is not the “best” way to heaven. He is the “Only” way to heaven.

What keeps us from going to heaven?

Romans 3:23, *“For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”*

Romans 6:23, *“For the wages of sin is death . . .”*

What keeps us from automatically going to heaven is our sin. Why? Because sin brings death to all its victims. Sin brings physical death to our bodies and more terrifying, spiritual death to one's soul. Since heaven is place of eternal life, no one with sin and death can enter heaven.

If we can't enter heaven with sin in our lives and permeating our souls, how do we remove it? How can such an inner disease of the soul be removed forever so we can experience heaven for all eternity?

Unfortunately for us, cleansing our souls of sin, is something we can never do for ourselves. It is too deep of a sickness that is beyond our ability to self heal or self cleanse. Not by hard work. Not by good work. Not by any work. It takes someone who is without sin to pay the ransom for someone with sin. Someone who is perfect and without sin would have to come and voluntarily die in that person's place to pay the debt their sin demands.

That is where Jesus, literally, comes to the rescue.

Jesus made heaven possible.

Romans 6:23, *“For the wages of sin is death . . . but the gift of God is eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

Romans 5:8, *““But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

1 Corinthians 15:3-4, *“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.”*

Romans 10:9, *“. . . if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

Jesus invites us to join him in heaven.

John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him, will not perish but have everlasting life.”*

John 1:12, *“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”*

Revelations 3:20, *“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”*

Jesus not only died for our sins, but knocks on the door of every person’s heart to let himself in and be the Lord and Savior of their life. And if Jesus is your Lord and Savior, then heaven is waiting for you. Have you opened the door of your heart to his constant knocking?

In its most simplistic form, the good news is this . . .

“Jesus died in our place, so that he could take us to his place.”

I can explain it for you, but I cannot believe it for you.

Which brings us right back to the words of Jesus . . .

John 14:1-3, *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”*

Deacon believed that Jesus died for his sins and was raised again on the third day. As a result of that confession, Jesus promised he would be waiting for Deacon when he died and would be there to give him a homecoming welcome into heaven.

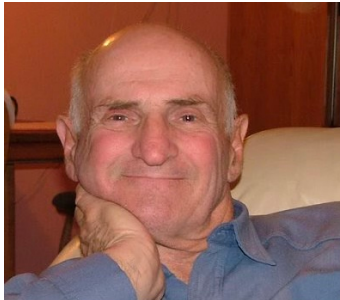
The question we need to all ask ourselves is, “When I die, will Jesus be waiting there to welcome me home?”

He promises to be standing at the door of your heart and knocking.

Will you let him in?

Let’s pray.

D. Mike Collins



Leroy "Deacon" Samuel Brooks
January 13, 1938 - November 4, 2023

My Father-In-Law