

## **Beyond the Magic: A Greater Joy Awaits**

**By: David Burruss**

We spent this past week at Disney World, and I have to tell you, it was everything you would hope a family trip like that could be. The kids were wide-eyed from the moment we walked through those gates, and there were moments of pure joy and laughter that I know we will carry with us for a long time. Memories were made, and that is something to be genuinely grateful for.

Now, if you have ever mentioned Disney World around just about anyone, you already know what comes next. Somebody is going to say it. "It's the most magical place on earth." Or "It's the happiest place on earth." And standing there watching my family light up the way they did, I understood what people mean when they say that. There is something about that place that seems designed, down to the smallest detail, to make you feel like the world is full of wonder and delight.

But I kept coming back to something in my heart even in the middle of all that happiness, because there is a joy that this world simply cannot manufacture, no matter how much imagination and effort goes into it. The happiest moment I will ever know, the one that will make every other good day pale in comparison, is the day I am called home to heaven. And I say that not to dampen the fun of a good vacation, but because I think we sometimes forget just how glorious that promise really is.

The apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 1:21, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." That is a remarkable thing to say. Gain. Not loss, not a sad farewell, but gain. Paul had seen enough of this world to know that its best offerings are still only shadows of what God has prepared for those who love Him. And in 1 Corinthians 2:9, Paul reminds us of what is written, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." Think about that honestly for a moment. The most beautiful thing you have ever laid eyes on, the most perfect day you have ever lived, the deepest happiness you have ever felt, and none of it has even scratched the surface of what heaven holds.

Jesus Himself said in John 14:2-3, "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." He was not speaking in vague, poetic terms. He was making a real promise to real people, and that promise still stands for every soul who has obeyed the gospel and is walking faithfully with Him today. There is a place being prepared. There is a reunion coming.

And in Revelation 21:4, John gives us a glimpse of that place, describing how God "will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." No more pain. No more goodbyes. No more grief tucked in the corner of an otherwise happy day. Just the fullness of God's presence, forever, with every person we have loved who died faithfully in Christ.

So yes, Disney World was wonderful, and I am so glad we went. But I came home with something I did not expect, which was a renewed longing for a place far greater than any park or kingdom this earth could ever build. The world works very hard to give us glimpses of magic, and sometimes it comes close. But only God can give us the real thing, and He has promised it to every one of His children who remain faithful to the end. That is not just the happiest place on earth. That is the happiest place that will ever exist, and it is waiting for us.