

FAITH CHAT

with James & John

What Should We Focus On In This Life?

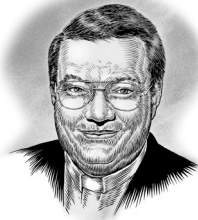
Know This...

Each of us will face death, final judgment, and heaven or hell. Our focus in this life will determine which eternal destination we choose. Through Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection the gates of heaven were opened for us; but not all of us will enter. When we die and come before Christ, we will be judged for heaven or hell. God gives us the grace we need to avoid sin, to avoid hell, and to share eternity with Him in heaven. All we have to do is allow His grace to work in our lives.



John: God does not judge us for heaven or hell. We judge ourselves through our faith in Jesus and through our openness to His grace. Thus, our focus in this life should be on heaven.

James: When we die and come before the judgment seat of Christ, we will have sealed our fate based on how we chose to live. Heaven and hell are the choices. After we breathe our last breath, there is no second chance.



John: We will rejoice in heaven's eternal bliss or suffer in hell's eternal torment.

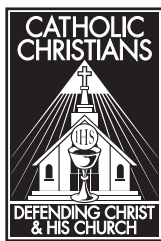
James: There is no grief, pain, suffering, or hate in heaven. Heaven is indescribable joy and exaltation.

John: We must be open to God's grace; for it is only through His grace that any of us can enter heaven.

James: In the joy of heaven, we will see God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—as He is, face to face. This, the Beatific Vision, will consume us.

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"Blessed are you when men insult you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you [falsely] because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven." ^{Mt 5:11-12} Jesus preached challenging but also comforting words on the reality of heaven. "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so where I am you may also be." ^{Jn 14:1-3} Who will see God? Jesus tells us, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." ^{Mt 5:8}

"Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven—though a purification or immediately—or immediate and everlasting damnation." CCC 1022 "Those who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ." CCC 1023 "The Beatific Vision is 'the contemplation of God in heavenly glory, a gift of God which is a constitutive element of the happiness (or beatitude) of heaven.'" CCC Glossary



The overriding mission of the Catholic Church is the salvation of souls. The Apostle Paul declared, "God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth." ^{1 Tim 2:4} "Just as it is appointed that men die once, and after death be judged, so Christ was offered up once to take away the sins of many; He will appear a second time not to take away sin but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await Him."

^{Heb 9:27-28} Paul says heaven is beyond what we can grasp with our finite intellect and imagination. "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love Him." ^{1 Cor 2:9} John the Apostle says in his Apocalypse, "Nothing unclean will enter it [heaven]." ^{Rev 21:27} When John says 'unclean,' he is talking about a human soul that dies in a state of sin. The Old Testament Book of Sirach offers us excellent advice. "In whatever you do, remember your last days, and you will never sin."

Heavenly Father; You sent Your only Begotten Son to live among us, to put an end to death, and to save us from our sins. I am forever grateful to You for giving me the means to turn away from sin and to do Your will. I pray that I will recognize and reject the many distractions and temptations of this world and the whispers of Satan. I pray that I will focus my life on your will for me; for I live in the hope of spending eternity with You in heaven. I ask this through Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior. Amen.

