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The Christian's Welcome Home

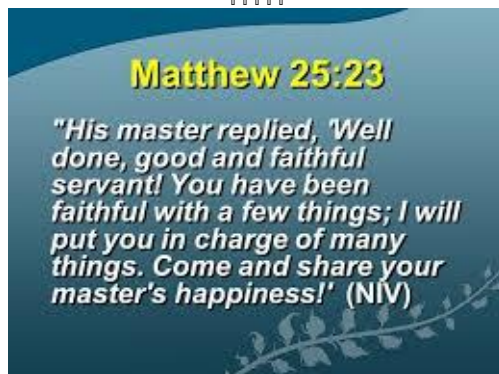
*How sweet will be the welcome home,
(welcome home)
When this short life is o'er;
When pain and sorrow, grief and care,
(grief and care)
Shall trouble us no more.*

*When we the lovely promised land
(promised land)
With spirit eyes shall see;
We'll join the holy angel band,
(angel band)
In praise, dear Lord, to Thee.*

*Chorus:
Welcome home, sweet welcome home,
My home, sweet home,
Welcome home, sweet welcome home,
The Christian's welcome home.*

*Charles Edward Pollock
C. E. P*

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Preparing for the Journey

My husband and I were preparing for a journey. Since we had never been to the northeast part of our great country, it had long been our dream to travel to Maine. In just a matter of days, that dream would become reality, Lord willing.

Several weeks earlier, we obtained a Maine state map and tourist information booklet. We pored over the map to see where we wanted to go and what we wanted to see and do in the northeast. We located a congregation for services on the Sunday we would be in Maine. We booked air flights and hotels and reserved a rental car.

Our departure was just days away, so we did packing trial runs. After all, we had to take more clothing than usual—and heavier clothing at that. Would it all fit in carry-on bags, or would we have to go through the hassle of checking our bags? Would we be able to fit all the cosmetic items we needed in one small zip-lock bag? If not, what could we do without for two weeks? Our passports were ready to go, just in case we decided to go into Canada while we were there. We were diligently preparing for this journey.

There is another journey on which every person is going, the journey to eternity. What kind of preparations have we been making for that journey? Have we been as diligent in preparing for that journey as for the trip to Maine?

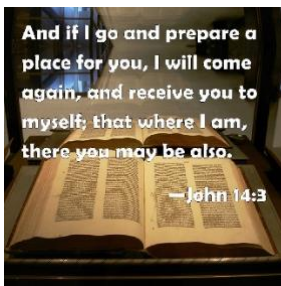
What do we need to do for that journey? We need to be sure we have the right "clothing," and just what we need is found in Galatians 3:26-27: ²⁶ *So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,* ²⁷ *for all of you who were baptized into Christ have **clothed yourselves with Christ.***

We also need the full armor of God as described in Ephesians 6:14-17: ¹⁴ *Stand firm then, with the **belt of***

truth buckled around your waist, with the **breastplate of righteousness** in place, ¹⁵ and with your **feet fitted with the readiness** that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God.

Our transportation to Maine was airplanes and automobiles, but what vehicle takes us on our journey to eternity? Just as those who were outside the ark in the days of Noah perished in the flood, there will be those who miss the mark on the Day of Judgment. Matthew 7:23 says, ²³ *And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'* They had failed to clothe themselves with Christ, Galatians 3:27.

Where will this earthly journey take us? For those who obey the gospel and live for Christ, the end of the journey will be unbelievably wonderful! Jesus comforted His disciples with these words: *"Do not let your hearts be*



troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going. ...⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:1-4, 6.

In the words of an old hymn, Heaven will surely be worth it all. Revelation 21:4 tells us: *"⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

We eagerly anticipated our journey to Maine, but we are looking forward with even greater joy and expectation to reaching our final destination with our awesome, holy God. No earthly journey can compare with the joyous reward of the spiritual journey back to our Creator. This is the journey on which our greatest concentration and preparations must be. No matter the cost and duration of this life, our holy God will make it all worthwhile in the end. The Apostle Peter wrote to Christians who were being severely persecuted that their sufferings would be temporary and the reward would be eternal: ¹⁰ *And the*

God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 1 Peter 5:10.

Yes, Heaven will indeed be worth it all. This journey of journeys is by far the most important one for which to prepare.

Evelyn Waite, Rolla, MO

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The Sounds of Life

~Allison Bruno

The machines **beep**—

Doctors direct

Nurses clamor

A yell, a cry, a smile

A sweet new smile

The clock **buzzes**—

Books gathered

Kisses given

A bus, a hesitation, a wave

A sweet little wave

The bell **tolls**—

Singers sing

Prayers said

A celebration, a kiss, a bride

A sweet pure bride

The voice **calls**--

Mothers cry

Fathers congratulate

A dream, a new role, a life

A sweet, new life

The phone **rings**--

Daughters sob

Sons cry

An end, a beginning, a
peace

A sweet new peace

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Journeys of Loving Service

As Moses and the Israelite children journeyed from Egypt to Canaan, each of us is on a journey. Daily, we journey,

travelling under the leadership of Christ, towards our promised land—our heavenly home with God.

In the blink of an eye, our daily norm can change. That is the way it has been for the Webber family when on the 4th of January, my sweet mother-in-law, Darline, fell on her way to the bathroom. After a long discussion, we finally got her to agree that an ambulance needed to be called and that she needed to be checked out at the emergency room. After a long night, we found out that she had broken her femur, close to her hip. Surgery was needed to place a rod down her femur, and screws were placed in her bone where it had splintered.

After 87 years, this woman who had spent her life serving her family and others (just one of her talents that she had developed in her service to the Lord) was shutdown. Darline is a loving wife, mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, aunt, and—best of all—sister-in-Christ. As a wonderful cook (John says that he taught her all she knows), she used that talent in her service to God. She cares about and loves others and has served on projects such as teaching children, bible studies, the clothing room, the pantry, card ministry, and food preparation for others. She has pretty much lived her life by Romans 13:8 **Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law** and Colossians 3:23 **And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.**

As the one who has stepped into a small part of her duties, I shared with her that she is a saint (which she is, as you know, not because of what she has done, but because of what Christ did for us—praise God), and I didn't know how she continually did all that she did. I get completely worn out. In my moments of self-pity, I keep saying to myself Galatian 6:9 **And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.** But I must confess to you that I have been fainting, so I am praying for strength; patience; kindness; and love, love, love; and I am reading 1 Corinthians 13 over and over. **Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.**

Darline has had quite a struggle through all of this. Shortly after she was admitted to the rehab center, she was diagnosed with a disease called C-Diff that is highly contagious. She is taking antibiotics for it; however, every time she gets an infection they give her antibiotics that work against the antibiotic to battle C-Diff. She will say, "I didn't ask for this, it just happened to me." A woman who has always had a cheery smile and warm

hug for anyone who needed a hug now should not be touched unless you have the protective gear on. At times, I am sure she knows how people felt when in Lamentations 4:5 **They cried unto them, Depart ye; it is unclean; depart, depart, touch not.** I cannot wait until we can go back to just hugging and holding hands as before. Until such time, we must be cautious and deliberate in our caring.

In our life-changing moment (which is not unique nor is it as devastating as what others have gone through), we have seen others on their journeys of loving service. Our family-in-Christ has been so kind and loving in their service to God of which Darline has been the physical recipient. She has received cards, visits, flowers, goodies, song services, prayers in which she was lifted up to the Father (those said in her presence and those said in your personal prayers), and the opportunity to remember the sacrifice of Christ Jesus and commune with our Lord (she is so thankful for this). Darline and our whole family are so grateful for your individual journey of loving service. Praise God and may He continue to bless you on your journey. John 13:34-35 **A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.**

Kathy Webber, Rolla, MO



Travel with Love, Light, and Wisdom

(Ephesians 5: 1-21)

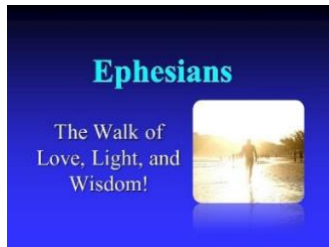
We all have had a vacation, business trip, or time we travelled that it seemed like the journey would never end. Problems arise such as an overbooked flight, forgetting an important item, car trouble, lost hotel reservations, and more. Just off the top of my head, I can remember family vacations where our family stayed in a construction zone during a hotel remodel. We have had rain follow us across the country from Missouri, across the Appalachians, and clear to Wrightsville Beach. Some of the time, we handled it well and others it was less than pleasant.

In handling our walk through life, we can handle things gracefully or focus on the negative. Paul gave the Ephesians some sound advice. In Ephesians 5:2, Paul told them to, "...walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given himself for us." Paul gives us some of the distractions to avoid on our walk in the next few verses.

We often become so focused on the wrong as we journey through life that we get side-tracked. Love is the vehicle

that keeps us safe and content as we make our trek. If we show our love as God has loved us, we have a coping mechanism when things that are out of our control go wrong. We know if we react in love to any distraction, we bring our minds back to the path.

Paul continues in Ephesians 5:8 tells us to *“Walk as children of light.”* If we do not have the ability to see where we are going, we know how things can go wrong on a vacation. As we become older and cannot see as



well by the headlamps of the car, we time things so we can get home before dark. As the verses below say, *“light exposes the unfruitful works of darkness.”* Ephesians 5: 8-9

speaks of us being children of light, and we know that light is Christ. It also speaks of what we can realize in the light. We can see the fruit of the Spirit, which in this account lists all goodness, righteousness, and truth.

The third help Paul mentions is walking in wisdom. In Ephesians 5:15 Paul says, *“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”* Wisdom, in simple terms, is using what we know to make a realization that will give us a decision. We need to take time on the journey to recognize what is right and execute it.

The phrase, *“redeeming the time,”* gives us the instruction to take advantage of times of service. Thus, opportunity to do good and help other weary travelers headed for the same destination are the wise things to do. The desire for us to give the help is the love we have within us.

Walk in Love, Light, and Wisdom to make our precious destination of Heaven.

Eric Derrickson
Bolivar, MO



Looking Ahead

My husband and I like to travel. We’ve seen most of the 50 states, cruised the Caribbean many times, and have toured the Holy Land, the British Isles, and traveled the Rhine River. We’ve seen so much of the beauty that God created for us.

We try to plan our trips a year in advance, for a couple of reasons. The first reason we do that is so we have a whole year to pay for it before we go. Then we can go

with clear minds, knowing it’s already paid for and not having to worry about how to cover the expenses. The second reason is the most important one to me – it’s something to look forward to. When I would be having a bad day in the office, I could think ahead to what was coming and know that even though I might not be enjoying this particular day, it was helping me to reach that travel goal in the future. I could go online and look at excursions or things to do in the area where we planned to travel, and it helped to lift my spirits.

I am looking forward to a spiritual destination as well. I don’t have to worry about the expenses of this trip because my Savior, Jesus Christ, has already paid the cost. I can look in my Bible and see all the beautiful things that one day I will get to see in person. Where I am going is so beautiful, that the apostle John had trouble finding human words to describe the awesome streets that look as if they are paved with gold, as well as walls and rivers and thrones so beautiful they surpass the shine and sparkle of every earthly jewel.



When I am having a bad day, I can think about all the wonderful things I will see and will get to participate in when I reach my destination. My Father, the Creator of this universe, will be there to show me all the sights. My Brother, Jesus, will be watching for me as well. We can get together and talk about the happiness we enjoy in each other’s company. My loved ones will join with me as we explore this marvelous destination together.

Have you made the proper preparations for your trip?

Lorna Smith, Lubbock, TX



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