

GNITN

#1258

Preaching Heaven While Ignoring Hell On Earth

Too Heavenly Minded

There is an old phrase people sometimes use as an insult: *"You're so heavenly minded, you're of no earthly good."*

The idea is that someone can be so focused on heaven, prophecy, worship, doctrine, prayer, or spiritual things that they become useless in everyday life. They ignore suffering. They neglect responsibility. They talk about eternity but do nothing for the hurting person right in front of them. And to be fair, that can happen. But biblically, that phrase only describes someone who is unbalanced, not someone who is truly heavenly minded. Because if we are truly heavenly minded in the way Jesus taught us to be, we should become more useful on earth, not less. The Christian is not called to choose between heaven and earth as if they are enemies. We are called to live on earth as citizens of heaven. [Philippians 3:20](#) says:

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." (NKJV)

But Jesus also said in [Matthew 5:14-16](#):

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (NKJV)

Notice the balance. Our citizenship is in heaven, but our light shines here. Our hope is eternal, but our good works are visible now. Our reward is with God, but our service is often seen by people in need.

Not Called To Escape, But To Serve

Jesus never taught His people to be detached from human suffering. He taught us not to be owned by the world, but He also sent us into the world. In [John 17:15-18](#), Jesus prayed:

"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one... As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world." (NKJV)

That is the Christian tension. We are not of the world, but we are sent into it. We are pilgrims, but we are not useless pilgrims. We are strangers, but not careless strangers. We are temporary residents, but we are still ambassadors. [2 Corinthians 5:20](#) says:

"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us." (NKJV)

An ambassador represents another kingdom while living in a foreign land. That is exactly what Christians are doing. We belong to the Kingdom of God, but we are stationed here for a purpose.

Jesus Is the Perfect Balance

Jesus gave us the perfect example of being heavenly minded and earthly useful. He spent time alone with the Father. [Luke 5:16](#) says:

"So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed." (NKJV)

Jesus was deeply heavenly minded. He lived in constant communion with the Father. He said in [John 5:19](#):

"The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do." (NKJV)

But that heavenly connection did not make Him passive. It made Him powerful, compassionate, and useful. He healed the sick. He fed the hungry. He taught the confused. He touched the leper. He welcomed children. He wept with the grieving. He confronted hypocrisy. He preached repentance. He pointed people to eternal life.

[Matthew 9:35-36](#) says:

“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them.”

That is the balance. Jesus preached the Kingdom, but He also healed bodies. He cared about eternity, but He also cared about hunger. He called people to repentance, but He also had compassion on their pain. In **Matthew 14**, before feeding the five thousand, Jesus did not say, “Their hunger is temporary, so it does not matter.” He fed them. [Matthew 14:16](#) says:

“But Jesus said to them, ‘They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.’”
Jesus cared about souls, but He did not ignore stomachs. (NKJV)

Sometimes The Eternal Work Must Take Priority

Balance does not mean everything always gets equal time, equal money, or equal attention. Sometimes the spiritual need must come first. In [Mark 8:36](#), Jesus said:

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (NKJV)

There is no amount of humanitarian work that can replace the gospel. Feeding someone is good. Clothing someone is good. Helping someone rebuild after disaster is good. But if we help people live a better temporary life while never pointing them to eternal life, we have not fully loved them. Jesus said in [John 6:27](#):

“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life.”
(KNJV)

That does not mean food does not matter. Jesus fed people. But He also taught that earthly provision is not the highest need. A healed body still needs a redeemed soul. A full stomach still needs the Bread of Life. So, there are seasons where a church, a family, or a believer may need to put more time, money, and energy into evangelism, discipleship, missions, Bible teaching, prayer, and worship. [Colossians 3:1-2](#) says:

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above... Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” (NKJV)

But that verse does not mean ignore people. It means our earthly actions should be governed by heavenly priorities.

The Door To The Eternal One

There are also times when love requires immediate action. [James 2:15-17](#) says:

“If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” (NKJV)

That is strong. God is not impressed by spiritual language that refuses practical obedience.

[1 John 3:17-18](#) says:

“But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” (NKJV)

Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is buy groceries. Sometimes the most eternal thing you can do is help rebuild a home. Sometimes the most Christlike thing you can do is sit with a grieving person. Sometimes the gospel becomes visible when love puts on work gloves. This is why disaster relief ministries, mercy ministries, missions organizations, and local churches can be such powerful witnesses. Whether it is a large ministry like Samaritan’s Purse, Convoy of Hope, Mission of Mercy in India, or a small local church quietly helping a family pay a bill, repair a home, buy food, or get through a crisis, the principle is the same:

Christians help because we belong to Christ. We are not just trying to make the world think we are nice. We are showing the character of the Kingdom we represent.

A Cup of Water Can Carry Eternal Meaning

Jesus gave one of the simplest examples of this. [Mark 9:41](#) says:

“For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.” (NKJV)

A cup of water is small. It is ordinary. It is not flashy. It does not require a platform, a title, or a massive budget. But Jesus says even that matters when it is done in His name. Why? Because the act is earthly, but the motive is heavenly. That is the balance. A Christian can hand someone a cup of water and, in that moment, be serving both worlds. They are meeting a real need on earth while storing up treasure in heaven. [Matthew 6:19-21](#) says:

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Helping people in this world does not have to distract from heaven. When done in obedience to Christ, it can actually be one of the ways we invest in heaven.

Earthly Mercy With Heavenly Weight

In [Luke 10](#), Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan. A wounded man was left half dead. Religious people passed by. But the Samaritan stopped, bandaged his wounds, poured on oil and wine, placed him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and paid for his care.

Then Jesus said in [Luke 10:37](#):

“Go and do likewise.”

The Good Samaritan did not merely say, “I’ll pray for you.” He gave time. He gave attention. He gave resources. He gave inconvenience. He gave mercy. That does not make him less spiritual. According to Jesus, that is what neighbor-love looks like.

We Must Avoid Two Ditches

There are two unbalanced extremes Christians can fall into. The first ditch is being so focused on earthly help that we forget eternity. That becomes mere humanitarianism without the gospel. It may help people temporarily, but it does not address their deepest need. The second ditch is being so focused on spiritual language that we refuse earthly obedience. That becomes empty religion. It talks about heaven but ignores the neighbor bleeding on the road. Jesus avoids both ditches. He says in [Matthew 4:17](#):

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (NKJV)

And He also says in [Matthew 25:35-36](#):

“For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me.” (NKJV)

The Kingdom Jesus preached was not shallow. It was not merely social work, and it was not merely religious talk. It was the reign of God breaking into real lives.

Temporary But Not Useless

[1 Peter 2:11](#) calls believers “sojourners and pilgrims.” [Hebrews 13:14](#) says:

“For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.” (NKJV)

This world is not our final home. But temporary does not mean meaningless. A hotel room is temporary, but you still should not trash it. A mission field is temporary, but you still work faithfully in it. An assignment is temporary, but you still complete it well. [Jeremiah 29:7](#) told God’s people, even while they were in exile:

“Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace.” (NKJV)

Even in a place that was not their true home, God's people were called to seek good, pray, build, and serve. That applies to us. We're citizens of heaven, but here we should be a blessing.

Preview Of The Coming Kingdom

When Christians help the hurting, feed the hungry, care for widows and orphans, support missions, preach the gospel, disciple believers, and serve their neighbors, we are giving the world a glimpse of the coming Kingdom. [Revelation 21:4](#) says:

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying."

Every act of mercy now points forward to the day when Christ will make all things new. When we comfort the grieving, we point to the God who will wipe away every tear. When we feed the hungry, we point to the abundance of the Father's house. When we welcome the stranger, we point to the invitation of the gospel. When we help rebuild what was destroyed, we point to the Redeemer who restores all things. We cannot bring the fullness of heaven to earth by human effort. Only Jesus will do that when He returns. But we can live as witnesses of that coming Kingdom.

Practical Wisdom: Knowing Where to Invest

There will be times when you need to put more time and money toward earthly needs.

A family in your church loses their home. A neighbor has no food. A disaster hits a community. A missionary needs emergency support. A widow needs help with repairs. A child needs medical care. In those moments, love may require immediate action. [Proverbs 3:27](#) says:

"Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so." (NKJV)

But there will also be times when you need to invest more heavily into eternal work.

Bible teaching. Prayer. Evangelism. Discipleship. Missions. Training leaders. Supporting gospel workers. Building strong families. Strengthening the local church. [Galatians 6:10](#) gives a helpful principle:

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." (NKJV)

"As we have opportunity" means wisdom is needed. We cannot do everything at once. We cannot fund every cause, attend every need, or solve every problem. But we can obey God with what He puts in front of us.

Heavenly Minded People Should Be Earthly Useful

The problem is not being too heavenly minded. The problem is having a false idea of heaven. Biblical heavenly-mindedness doesn't make us useless. It makes us loving, generous, courageous, sacrificial, and faithful. Because we believe in heaven, we know this world is not all there is. Because we believe in judgment, we preach repentance. Because we believe in resurrection, we comfort the grieving. Because we believe in the Kingdom, we serve the broken. Because we belong to Christ, we give the cup of water in His name. So maybe the better phrase is this:

Don't be so earthly minded that you forget heaven.

And don't be so falsely heavenly minded that you ignore earth.

Be truly heavenly minded, and you will become exactly what this world needs.

Jesus was the most heavenly minded person who ever lived. And no one has ever been of more earthly good.