

Sometimes, we are in the wrong place – a place of temptation. Our conscience bothers us. Sometimes, God must put us in our places with corrections and spiritual “spankings” for our own good!

Those of you who are returning to school will find yourselves in situations and places where you need to ask yourselves: “Why am I here?” If your answer is, “I am a redeemed child of God, belong to Him and bound for heaven,” That answer will determine for good how you will act in school and how well you will do. The same applies to all of us who are in the workplace each day.

The unbelieving person always does things backwards. He thinks first about climbing the ladder of success – of getting to a higher place; but that place is always somewhere on this earth!

The only way to think as a child of God is to ask the question I asked you early: *Where is my place in eternity?*” If you

are convinced that you belong in that heavenly place because of Jesus, that will determine what your place will be each moment of your time on earth. Why are YOU here in this church this morning?

There are many good reasons. But the motive is the most important thing: To hear the word of your Savior Who says: ‘I am coming back to take you to be with Me where I am.’”

But why are you HERE? – In this or that circumstance of life? Why are you suffering patiently with aches and pains or with some disease? Why are you not running away as the world does, or like Judas did? In time of trouble and loss, the world often runs ever more feverishly to fill itself up with life and pleasure on this earth. Why don’t you run the same way?

Why are you standing your ground? Because you are saying: “Lord, I know this is the path you have chosen for me on the way to heaven. Help me stand here, right HERE, and testify to the world about your love for me, and that I belong in heaven because of Jesus’ doing and dying for me.”

Our Lord is returning for two reasons: He is going to judge the world, and He is going to bring us to heaven. And all that counts for us each day is that we know for sure that we belong in heaven because of Him. Knowing that our eternal place is in heaven, we will always strive to be in the right place here on earth. May God grant that it be so with each of us for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

8/26/12 T12 Ed. Sun.

INI

Jn 14:1-3

In the Name of Jesus, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

It’s time to begin a new school year. “Children,” “students,” and “people” all have a place in school, don’t they? There are even places for “teachers”!

One of the first things parents try to teach their children is that “there is a place for everything, and everything has its place.”

The same thing applies to people: “There is a place for everyone, and everyone has his or her place.”

When we say that everyone has a “place,” we don’t mean that everyone takes up space somewhere. For example, if you were to give directions to my house, you might say, “His place is over there on the other side of the creek.” But my house is not really my “place” at this moment. My “place” is right here where I ought to be, where I belong.

## WHERE IS YOUR PLACE?

### I.

Eventually, we are all going to the place where we belong in eternity. We are not all going to the same place. Many people believe that God will accept all people into heaven regardless of what they have done with His Savior-Son. Is this really so?

Take a look at our passage from the Book of Acts. Since Judas had committed suicide after betraying Jesus, a replacement had to be chosen to join the eleven apostles. So, the disciples prayed that the Lord would help them determine who was to replace Judas. Now look at what is said about Judas in v. 25. Judas **“turned away”** From the ministry and apostleship of Christ **“to go to his own place.”** Where was Judas’ own place? Where was that place that was perfectly suited for Judas, whom Jesus called **“lost,”** and **“the son of destruction”** (Jn. 17:12) ?

Hell is the place where the fires are never put out and the worm never dies! (Mk. 9:44) Why was hell the place Judas belonged? Was his betrayal of Christ an unforgivable sin? No! Jesus died for that sin too! But Judas belonged in hell because he rejected His Savior’s Word and turned away from the service of

Christ in unbelief. Judas went to his own place because he went his own way, pursuing the covetous desires of his flesh. He ended up killing himself in despair, in spite of all that Jesus tried to do to save his poor soul!

According to Luke 12, the "foolish rich man" also died and went to hell. He did not belong in hell because he was rich. He belonged in hell because he did not find his greatest riches in God, His Savior. The rich man **"was not rich toward God,"** Jesus tells us. (Lk. 12:21)

Rev. 21 tells us that the **"cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. . . ."** (Rev. 21:8) Hell is where they belong who live in sin, and that is where all those will go who turn away from Christ to their own ways and despise His word of repentance and forgiveness!

Where is your place in eternity? Is it heaven? Do you believe with all your heart and confess with your mouth that you will go to heaven because that is where you belong? Jesus wants all His believing disciples to be certain of their place in heaven. That's why he spoke these well-known words to His disciples before He died for our sins: **"I go to prepare a place for you,"** He said; **"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."** (John 14:6)

Our Lord's place was in heaven – the place suited for Him from eternity. But He came to earth to suffer the penalty of hell for the world of sinners so that we would not have to go to that place of eternal torment. That's why He says in John 3:16: **"Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life!"**

Only those who truly believe this message of God's forgiveness and love belong in heaven. On our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, my wife and I were granted free access to a wonderful "Bed 'n' Breakfast" place, because our children paid for it all. We belonged there because we knew the love of our children, and we accepted the gift they gave us.

So also, if you are a true disciple of Christ, then you believe

that Jesus paid for your place in heaven when He sacrificed Himself on the cross for your sins. If you know that you cannot prepare a place in heaven for yourself, but Jesus has done that for you, then truly your place is in heaven! If you long for heaven, and getting there is more important to you than anything else, then you belong there, and you may be certain that Christ will bring you to that perfect place in eternity! But where is your place until then?

## II.

Always we Christians have places where we belong in time. By faith in His Son, we are God's spiritual offspring. We have been saved for His heavenly place, and to live on earth as members of Christ's spiritual body destined for heaven! Therefore we should be able to account for where we are and what we are doing at any time. And yet the question might be very embarrassing. For we are not always where we ought to be or doing what we ought to be doing!

Take the case of God's prophet, Elijah. Elijah had been sent to preach the Law and the Gospel to God's O.T. people, Israel. But Elijah thought he alone was bound for heaven, and nearly everyone else in Israel was bound for hell!. He was not seeing the fruits of his ministry, so, feeling sorry for himself, he went off into the wilderness for a good cry! But the Lord came after him and asked, **"Elijah, what are you doing here in the wilderness, away from my people, away from your ministry to which I called you?"**

You who will be teaching our youth during the week week and others on Sunday mornings, may not always see the fruits of your labors. There will be frustrations, as there are in every ministry of God's Word. But your place will always be with the children entrusted to you, regardless of any inadequacies you may see in yourselves.

Your place of ministry will be in the classroom because your God has called you through us, His people. Your God has determined your place in our school this year. You remember that, and all of us will remember that too!

It is very important for all of us to be able at any given moment to answer the simple question: "Why am I here?"