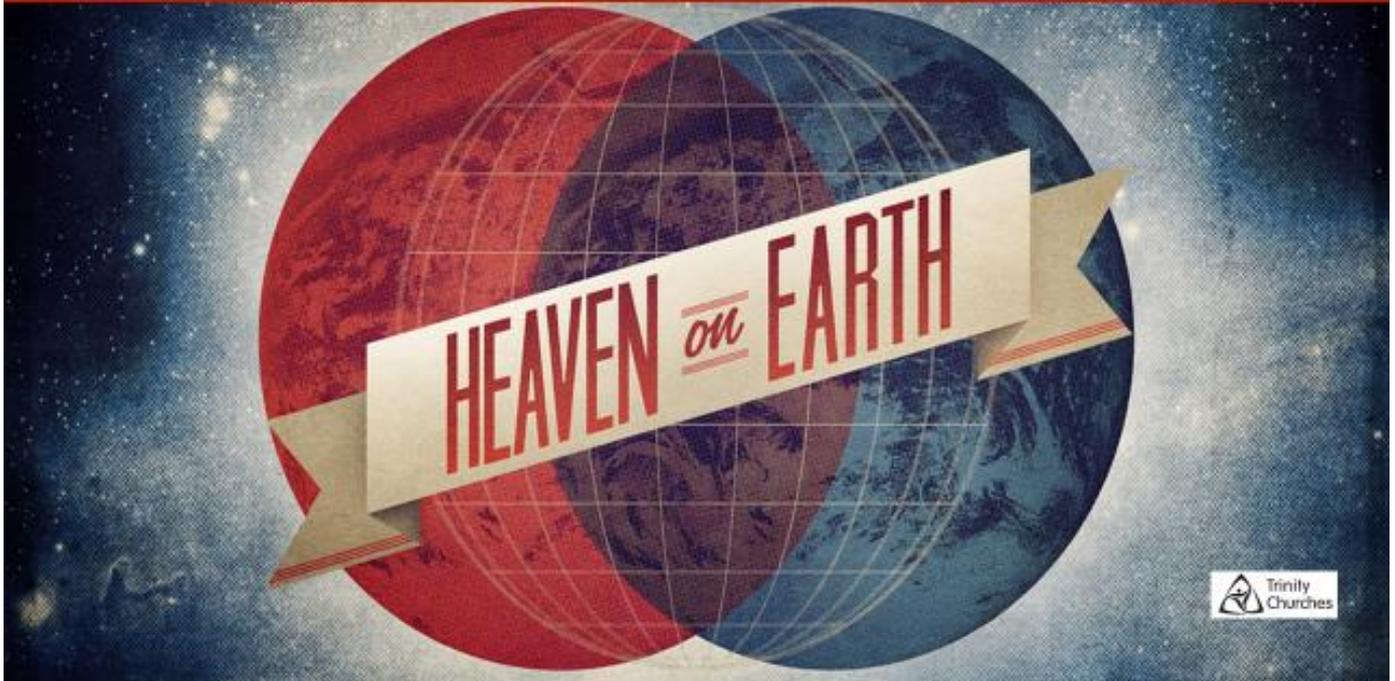


Sunday mornings in October and November



Prepared by Phil Cansdale

What comes into your mind if you are asked to imagine heaven? For most of us the word “heaven” conjures up a cartoon image of a city floating on cotton clouds, or of endless harp playing with halos and wings. And this is somewhere we get “beamed up to” when we die? Is this really a picture of God’s dwelling place? We’re going to be taking a walk through some of the ways the Bible thinks about heaven, and in a broken world seeing God’s hope and plan to bring heaven and earth together once more.

Date	Theme	Reading 1	Reading 2	Description
14 th October	Heaven is a place on earth?	Rev 21:1-7	Luke 14:15-24	<p>Many of us live with a view of heaven which can feel a long way away from what Scripture says. We’ll start by looking at Revelation 21, being reminded of the familiar good news in that passage, but challenged by these words as well. Luke 14 picks up the image of heaven as a party, and the urgency to respond to God’s offer of new life.</p> <p>What if heaven isn’t so much “somewhere up there we go when we die”, but more to do with God’s presence invading earth, starting now, and growing in the lives of his people and his church.</p>
21 st October	Stairway to heaven	Genesis 28:10-22	Mark 1:14-20	<p>The Genesis passage reminds us of the “thin places” between heaven and earth. God’s plan is to reunite heaven and earth, and heaven is at work much more than we realise it – if we have eyes to see. Jesus’ life and ministry are at the heart of this rescue plan, declaring “The Kingdom of God has come near”.</p> <p>How might we – like Jacob – be those who see heaven touching earth? And how might we – like those first disciples – live like the kingdom of heaven is near.</p>

28 th October	Tears in heaven?	Isa 65:17-25	John 14:1-6	<p>Isaiah is writing his words in exile, looking forward to a world of peace and harmony where all nations will be filled with God's presence – new heavens and a new earth.</p> <p>Jesus' ministry brings that about, and in John's gospel we hear his description of heaven as his "Father's house", and a promise that he will come back to bring these promises and longings to fruition.</p> <p>How much these words – and all our talk of heaven - bring joy and comfort to those who weep and mourn, to those who struggle and suffer?</p>
4 th November	Imagine there's no heaven	1 Thess 4:13-17	Matt 25:1-13	<p>Paul wrote his words to encourage people who were troubled about what happened when people die. He is trying to describe the indescribable in talking about the coming of the Lord, and uses language of falling asleep, Jesus coming, the dead being raised, and meeting the Lord in the air. What might all this mean?</p> <p>Meanwhile Jesus told the story of being ready and alert...</p> <p>How much we "encourage one another" with these words? Is there an urgency in our lives to be ready?</p>
11 th November	Remembrance Sunday	Tbc	Tbc	<p>Being one hundred years to the day since the end of WW1, we'll be marking this with larger-than-usual services. NB currently CTK will join the 9am or 1045 congregations at Holy Trinity</p>
18 th November	Knockin on heaven's door	Romans 8:18-22	Matt 6:9-13	<p>How do we live our lives between earth and heaven? One of the key things is to pray, that "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Paul talks about this in Romans 8, talking of all creation groaning out.</p> <p>What does this mean for us today, in the way that we live and the way that we pray?</p>
25 th November	Heaven for everyone?	Revelation 7:9-17	Matthew 6:19-21	<p>As we finish the series, we'll be looking at the impact of heaven in two areas of life: our worship, and our discipleship. There's something of Revelation that describes the worship of heaven which in part be our experience today. And Jesus' talk of treasures, hearts and heaven reminds us of the direction of our discipleship. Where are our hearts focussed?</p>

To take it further:

Book: "**Heaven**" by Paula Gooder, or its smaller companion title "**Where on earth is heaven**"

Podcast: "**A rough guide to heaven**" by Paula Gooder at St Paul's Cathedral. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Cf1xaggtfg>

Video: "**Heaven and Earth**" as part of the Bible Project. You'll find a video, some articles, a podcast and various other things. <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/heaven-earth/>

Book: "**Heaven**" by Randy Alcorn.