

## Resurrected Place (Series: Living on the Resurrection Side of Life)

John 14:1-4

Swiss psychiatrist Paul Tournier opens one of his most popular books with these words. “We are always looking for a place—for somewhere to be.” I think he’s right. From the first breath of birth to the final breath of death we need a place to be.

Maybe that’s why John 14 is such a beloved passage of the Bible. “Let not your hearts be troubled. In my Father’s house are many rooms. I am going there to prepare a place for you.” Jesus is providing a place for you, a place to be.

God made families so we could have a place to be. That’s why healthy families are so essential to society. We need a place to meet our basic needs, a place to love and be loved, a place to nurture and to be nurtured. That’s what families are for.

Henri Nouwen says we are people who have an address but are seldom home. We have houses, some of them quite elaborate, but do we have homes, places of safety, centers of love, and communities of acceptance?

Robert Frost says “Home is a place where when you go there, they have to take you in.” The Bible says home is a place where when you go there, they want to take you in. The father of the prodigal runs down the road to greet his wayward son. Shouting with each step, “Welcome home, my child, come on in; welcome, my son, it’s good to see you again.” We need places like that.

While our oldest son, Ben, When I moved from New Boston Texas to Camron Texas to take a new pastorate. I consulted him about the move, but in fine, late adolescent form he informed me that he no longer lived in my house. He was out on his own. So, I could do whatever I wished. All was well until I got a 6-page letter about a week later. It was one, long sob from a lonely son who suddenly realized his place to be had been replaced. Even though his bedroom was still intact, he hadn’t even seen the new house. It was all foreign to him. He had lost his place, his place to be.

God created the Church for us to have a place, a place to be. Ultimately, church is not about buildings, denominations, pastors, customs, and traditions. Church is about people. The Church is a community of faith. It is a safe place where people can love and be loved and form a vital life-long relationship with God.

Parents of children and youth let me say thank you. It has not always easy to keep the vows you made at their baptism. Keeping sons and daughters under the ministry and guidance of the Church requires determination and dedication. So many things pull for our attention. But you have hung in there. You have kept the vows, and your children today fly on new wings of faith thanks to you.

I was eleven years old when I first considered the ministry as a life vocation. Some of you need to think about that too. You can help create a place where other people can find acceptance and a close relationship with God. The Church needs you.

Furthermore, it is our conviction that every Christian is a minister. Whether or not you carry the title, you are a minister too. People need your help, your support, and your love; that’s what the Church is all about.

You need the Church. Every child needs an earthly parent and a heavenly One. We need a host of sisters, brothers, friends, and peers, who will stick with us when the road is difficult. We need wings with which to fly. But we always need safe landing places too. I've always been grateful that my children had a place to go to when being home became difficult.

Whether young or old, married or single, rich or poor, strong or weak, leader or follower, the Church is of God and offers you a community of faith. So, people of every age and stage of life need what the Church alone can provide—a place to be.

The place prepared by Jesus has plenty of room. There are many abiding places. A WELCOME mat is at the front door. There is nothing about heaven that suggests narrow, limited, access. It's big enough to receive all who've gone before us and all who are yet to come.

Here we hang "NO VACANCY" signs on our motels; in heaven the sign reads "EVERYONE WELCOME." Let there be no anxiety about your place. God has a place for you.

When you have company at your house, you like a little time to get ready for their arrival. You fix things up a bit, plan some meals, and make some plans. That's what Jesus says to his disciples, troubled as they are. I need to get things ready for your arrival. I go to prepare a place for you.

The Place prepared is beaming with relationships. The true beauty of heaven does not lie in the buildings and furnishings and streets of gold.

What makes heaven, heaven, is that friends will be there we have loved long ago, peace like a river will flow. We will be in the presence of God and the company of one another. Separations will end. Pain will disappear.

The Place prepared is in the presence of Christ. "That where I am, there you shall be also." Barbara Walters did a documentary on heaven. She says it is the most interesting documentary she ever did "I think there is a great need and a great soul-searching in this country," says Barbara. People want to know about life after death.

Barbara herself was not a believer. She said she has no idea if she expects to go to heaven. Nevertheless, she concludes her interview with these words. "If you can believe that when you die you go to a better place, it certainly makes life more comfortable on earth."

Jesus is preparing a place for you, a place to be, a place to be here in this world of responsibility and concerns, a place over there where we shall be in the presence of the Lord forever. Claim your place in the Kingdom of God. It has been prepared for you. Amen.