

3-29-2024

## **Made for Eternity**

Anna Bennett

“As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven,” *1 Corinthians 15:48-49, ESV*.

### **Made for Eternity**

What an incredible year it has been. Full of joy, full of challenge. Full of growth and discovery. God’s faithfulness on display for us to witness each passing day regardless and because of the variety of experiences each of us encounter in this life. And while our life experiences help to shape us, who we are was not only put within us the day we were born but stretches far beyond this life into the life to come.

We can spend each day of our lives joyfully exploring our identity and what it means to be image bearers of God, but we will also be unable to comprehensively understand the fullness of this in this present moment alone. “Discovering who God has made us to be requires both this life and the life to come. This ‘timelessness’ of identity is the direct result of being made in His image, of being made in the image of a God who Himself exists outside of time.”<sup>11</sup>

Solomon famously penned a poem in Ecclesiastes 3 describing each of the individual moments that shape our lives and the various cycles of life we endure here under heaven. And perhaps it is exactly because of the dependable and even predictable nature of the cycles we encounter in life that we are motivated to search for something greater than ourselves, something unchanging.

Immediately after this poem, Solomon writes about God’s eternity. He writes that although our lives are constantly changing, ‘whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it . . . that which is, already has been; that which is to be, already has been.’ Solomon’s point is this: because life is so unpredictable, because it cycles through various seasons without warning, we must fix our hope on a God who does not. We must find identity in the one thing that remains the same. We must find identity in the Great I Am.”<sup>12</sup>

As I write this a song resounds in my heart: “Christ is my firm foundation, the rock on which I stand / when everything around me is shaken, I’ve never been more glad / that I’ve put my faith in Jesus” or that I’ve found my identity in Jesus. My moon-reflecting-the-light-of-the-sun kind of image-bearing, eternity-imprinted identity in the Creator and Savior and Victor of this world and the vast expanse of the universe. Eternal life is not just an extension of all we experience here on earth, but because of Jesus, we are meant to live the fullness of our identity while stepping into a life completely transformed. And not just someday. Beginning today.

This week, as you make The Main Thing, the main thing in your life, may you only and always look to Jesus for your identity who “from him and through him and to him are all things.” To him be glory forever. Amen.”<sup>[1]</sup>

### Reflection

1. Read Ephesians 1:4 – what does this tell you about your identity?
2. Read Hebrews 2:14-15 – what does this tell you about what Jesus has done for us?
3. Read John 17:3 – what does this tell you about eternal life?

### News and Resources

- Join us next week for Lawn Vespers at 7:30pm on Friday at Goliath Wall! Bring a blanket and dress warm.
- Find a meaningful sense of belonging by joining a student or faculty/staff LifeGroup today: [click here](#).
- If you are feeling anxious or have recently experienced loss or grief, call 423.236.2782 to talk to a counselor on campus! (This is a free service for Southern students.)
- **Talk** with Chaplain [Anna Bennett](#) or [Joseph Khabbaz](#) if you need someone to pray with or have a desire to grow spiritually.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Anderson, Hannah. 2014. Made for More: An Invitation to Live in God’s Image. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 165.

<sup>[2]</sup> 166.

<sup>[3]</sup> Romans 11:36