



# Just Visiting

## *The Holiness of a Homesick Heart*

September 24 , 2025

Today we're building our **faith by embracing the feeling of being a foreigner**. Cuz in one way or another, a lack of *harmony* with our *earthly home* is the *hallmark* of human life that *separates* us from every other animal. And that *reality* should *prompt* you to truly ponder **Do you belong here?**



Deer do; fish do; birds do. And you know *how* I know? They're perfectly content to *live* the *life* the earth *allows* and *die* the *death* the earth *demand*s. But *you*? No way do you belong here! And you know *how* I know? You're never *completely* content! *None of us are* – that's why we *need* the new *pillow* with stay-cool *technology*, the special *lotion* with anti-wrinkle *retinol*, and all the *other* products that *promise* to finally make us feel *at peace* in our *lives*. And yet, despite all our best efforts – we just *can't* seem to get comfortable; *why*? Well, it's because **we were built with an appetite for something beyond earth**. Deer, fish, and birds *weren't* – but *you* just want *more* than *this* place has to offer. And that's a *good* thing because **home is where the heart is, but the heart is where the hope is**.

So, if your *heart* calls *this* world *home* – like the deer, fish, and birds *do* – your *hope* will never outgrow what we have *here*. **It's only when a heart recognizes Heaven as home that hope can rise past this place**. So, when we *admit* that we *don't* feel like we *belong* down here – *that's* when we can finally *diagnose* the everyday *ache* of existence; we're homesick.

*Like Buddy the Elf*. Cuz he was a *human* –but since he was *raised* as an *elf*, he *assumed* the North Pole was his *home*. And although he *tried* to be *kind* and *content* – he couldn't help *feeling* hopelessly out of place. Tiny desks, short beds, and a host of other *mismatches* kept *grinding* against him *day after day* until all his problems *pointed* him to the undeniable *truth*: he *didn't* belong *there*. But, *that* realization *didn't* make him *bitter*; it made him *brave*. Cuz he *reasoned* that his *misfit* feeling *wasn't* just a *curse*, it was also a *clue* – cuz if he *didn't* belong *there*, then he must belong *somewhere* with *more suitable* surroundings that *would* serve as a *more satisfying* home. So he took the hint as enough *evidence* to set sail for a *father* and *home* that he *believed* before *seeing*. **That's faith**. It isn't wishful thinking or blind guessing; **faith is rational reasoning**. And it's what happens when we see *our* homesick *heart* as a *reason* to believe we should set sail to find *our* true *Father* and real *home* where we *feel* our *fit*.

[Cuz] Faith is the substance of things hoped for, [not the hope, and it's] the evidence of things not seen. [not the things] – Hebrews 11:1 NKJ

So, *where* we put our *faith* decides *how* we see our life, cuz **faith is the reason we use to make sense of reality**. It's the *trees* bending that *reveal* the reality of *wind*; it's the *apple* falling that *reveals* the reality of *gravity*; and it's our *foreigner* feeling that *reveals* the reality of *another home*.

Like C.S. Lewis famously argued: **"Creatures are *not* born with *desires* unless *satisfaction* for *those desires* exists. A *baby* feels *hunger*: well, there is such a thing as *food*. A *duckling* wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as *water*... If I find in *myself* a *desire* which no experience in *this world* can satisfy, the most *probable* explanation is that I was made for *another world*."**



So, here's the point, **our identity is discovered by faith**; cuz if we just *tune* our *faith* to the *truth* God built into every inch of *creation*, life will naturally *reveal* *who* we really *are* and *where* we really *belong*. And that's *critical information* because it *guides* our *expectations*. And like Bruce said last week, *adjusting* our *expectations* to *align* with God's *intentions* for our identity is the secret to true *satisfaction*!



I mean, if you woke up in an airport with *amnesia*, would you *assume* it's your *apartment*? No! Cuz every *clue* around you would *lead* you to *conclude* you're a *traveler* – *not a resident*. So, it would be *frustrating* to *expect* a *stove*, a *bed*, or a *couch* to get comfy; but it'd be *fulfilling* to *expect* a *suitcase*, a *ticket*, and a *plane* to take you *back* to your *real home*!



And *that's* what happens when we faithfully *follow* the *clues* of *this world*: we *learn* **we are travelers away from our heavenly home**. And the *more* *faith* *proves* the point, the *less* we *expect* this *airport* to *feel* like our *apartment*. And the *less* we *expect* from *this world*, the *more* we can *expect* from a *real home*. Cuz *faith* means every earthly *obstacle*, *conflict*, and *conundrum* is just *evidence* we're *meant* for a *better-fitting real home*.



[So, all that to say] Without faith it is impossible to *please God*, because anyone who *comes to Him* must [first] *believe* that He *exists* and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him. [Like Abel, Enoch, Abraham, and Noah who used *earthly evidence* as *faith* to figure it out. So,]...All these people were still *living by faith* [down here] when they died. [Cuz] They did *not* receive the things promised [up there]; they only *saw* them and welcomed them *from a distance*, [How? By] *admitting* that *they were foreigners and strangers on earth*. [Because] People who say such things *show* that they are [leaving] looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country – a *heavenly* one. Therefore God is *not* ashamed to be called *their* God, for He *has prepared* a city for them [to return to]. – Hebrews 11:6, 13-16 NIV



Cuz it sure *would* be a *shame* if you *acted* like *Heaven* was your *home*, but in the *end*, your *heart* lowered its *expectations* and *accepted* *earth*! **It breaks God's heart to see us settle for less when we're meant for more.** And *that's* why *His Word* says the *hallmark* of the *heroes* in Hebrews' "*Hall of Faith*" is an *earthly passport* stamped "*Just Visiting*."

So, the real question is, **why is it so hard to follow the faith that tries to lead us where we belong?!**



Well, to put it simply, **there's a war for your residency!** Both *this world* and your *Heavenly home* want you on *their side* – but for very *different* reasons: **Heaven wants your allegiance so you'll finally feel right** but **earth wants your allegiance to try to prove God wrong.** That's it. Because, like every *demon* in the *Bible* and every *enemy* of your *faith* – *this world* knows it's *too weak* to compete with *God* in a *fair* fight. So, it fights *dirty*. This world uses *half-truths*, *shallow reasoning*, and *deceptive distractions* to recruit *more residents* – so it can use us as *pawns* to claim superior *power* by virtue of the *popular opinion*. But *again*, God just wants us home with *Him* to be *healthy* and *happy*; and the *only* reason He lets us *endure* the war is to *teach* us *how* to turn *down* the enemy *temptation* that led us to *leave* back in the *beginning*. That is, **we're here to grow in faith so we won't fall for weak evidence ever again!** And as Peter says, *that* begins with affirming a *holy* identity:

As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who called you is *holy*, so be holy in all you do ... live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. – 1 Peter 1:1, 14-17 NIV

Get it? **Living like a foreigner is the beginning of holiness** – and you know *why*? Cuz the word *holy* just means to be “*set apart*” – the way a *foreigner's* home makes their identity “*set apart*” from the *locals*. Cuz odd *accents*, eccentric *appetites*, and curious *customs* all *set strangers apart* – but **the qualities that set foreigners apart keep them connected to their homeland.** So, we're commanded to *stay* “*set apart*” from *down here* to *keep* our *connection* with *up there*. But, boy do the locals love to try and convert you to their customs – *I know I do!*

[Which is why Peter reminds us of the battle:] Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. – 1 Peter 2:11 NIV



Now, I don't *think* I'm trying to *steal souls*, but I *do* love *convincing* people to *desire* what *I desire* – I make my poor family *watch* weird British *shows*, *eat* strange spicy *sushi*, and *try on* Costco's comfy *clothes* all the time. So, what's so *wrong* with trying to *convert* others to *my* customs? Well, maybe you should ask a whale.



Cuz *whales* are a lot like *you and me* – they're born *without* an understanding of their *surroundings*, they *rely* on environmental *evidence* to *guide* their *actions*, and they're obviously *different* from all the *other* animals that fill the ocean around them. Cuz whales need *air*.

Sure, just like fish, they live *in* the water, but they are not *of* the water. So, unlike fish, they must routinely surface to breathe the air from a foreign environment. And if a fish ever convinced them to just stay underwater the way everybody else lives their lives, they'd feel less and less strong and healthy – until they died from suffocation. Cuz **creatures with higher needs can't survive lowering their standards.** Cuz *everything* was designed with something specific to consistently need for survival; for fish it's water; for whales it's air; and for us it's the *presence* of God.



And because *He* makes *His* residence in *Heaven*, *survival* becomes *simple* upon arrival – **it's just this journey home that puts us in jeopardy**. Cuz, while we're here, we're like *whales underwater* – disconnected from our *designed need* and surrounded by a world of fish who feel at home. So,

[Sometimes His Word which Scripture calls] The seed... is *choked* by [earthly] life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature – Luke 8:14 NIV



Worldly worry pulls our *attention* down; worldly *wealth* pulls our *ambition* down; and worldly *pleasure* pulls our *appetite* down. And the more we let them, the more we start to suffocate. So, just like whales – **we must surface to take a spiritual breath**.



So practice *prayer*. Participate in *worship*. Find some *fellowship*. Read some *Scripture*. And schedule some *silence*. Find ways to *routinely* connect with God to *purposely* remind yourself of *where* you *belong* and *evaluate* if *that's* the *identity* you're currently *adopting*. Cuz **sometimes we can't see that we've gone native until we return to our roots**. And that's the last thing we want – cuz it *not only* means we're *accepting* our *suffocation*, but we're *surrendering* our *citizenship* and *pledging* our *allegiance* to a world that wants to drown each one of us in hopelessness. Cuz **the world can kill some pain; but only God can cure our condition**. So, don't *accept answers* while you're in *enemy territory*!



Don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. – James 4:4 NIV

Of course the *locals* are gonna try to *recruit* you with *quick fixes*, *temporary relief*, and *empty promises* – but *don't* take the *bait*! **Every struggle in life is a symptom of separation from our spiritual source!** Cuz *financial* frustrations, *health* problems, *relationship* difficulties, and *everything else* that the world offers to *fix* – *isn't* even a *problem* if we let *faith explain* the way *past* all the *earthly pain*:

For we [foreigners] know that if the earthly tent [this body] we live in is destroyed, we have a [spiritual] building from God, an eternal house in *Heaven*, not built by human hands. [But, because waiting makes us feel homesick,] Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling – 2 Corinthians 5:1-2 NIV

But groaning *isn't* grumbling. **Grumbling means complaining – groaning means yearning**. And *homesick groaning* is *good* cuz it *reminds* us we *belong* somewhere *better* and we just need to *surface* for a *spiritual breath* to strengthen our *connection* to our *intended destination*. **It's hopeless grumbling that carries a death sentence**; cuz it convinces us to *expect less*, *give in*, and *go native*.

So, *this* week, when you feel surrounded by all the *pressure* of your *problems*, remember, **you're just passing through**. And you should *expect* to *feel suffocated* by your *surroundings* because you're not *built* to breathe *this air*! And you should see every difficulty *down here* as the *evidence* that builds your *faith* in one *reality*: **you're a foreigner and this place is beneath you**. So, stay strong, surface often, and stick it out – cuz you are just *visiting* – and *there's no place like home*!