

X'ENT NEWS

PROVIDING EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP
THROUGH QUALITY CHRISTIAN TRAINING

Volume 22 Issue 2

October 2014

Our Eternal Home

Justin Turner



Image courtesy of Simon Howden at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

I lived in the same house for the first 18 years of my life. Although it wasn't a perfect house by any stretch of the imagination, it had everything a teenage boy could ever want. The house had a pool table, a kitchen drawer well-stocked with Little Debbie snacks, a refrigerator full of cokes, and a big yard where I could play football, basketball, or baseball with my friends.

Growing up, I never could fathom the idea of actually leaving that house. My mature, well-thought-out plan was to buy the house from my parents one day down the road when I was ready for them to move out and get a place of their own. Unfortunately, my parents had a different plan in mind and I got the boot after I graduated from high school.

I moved off to college where I bounced around from the dorms to an apartment, to a house, to a duplex, to a condo, and then back to an apartment. After college, I got married and we lived in three different apartments in the three years before we bought our first house.

My wife and I thought that this house was going to be our home for a long time. However, the Lord had different plans and, due to my job situation, we sold it about 10 months after we bought it. I won't drag you through all the details, but we've now been married for 11 years and we've owned four different houses.

In all of my house hunting over the years, the one conclusion that I've come to is that there is no perfect house. If you think of your own home, I'm sure that it won't take you long to find some flaw that you aren't 100% thrilled about. You may have even bought your home knowing that there was something you just knew that you didn't like. It could be that the kitchen isn't quite like the ones you see on HGTV, or that you really wanted that fourth bedroom, or maybe your house is too far from church, or the yard is too small.

The more I think about houses and the work it takes to maintain them, the more God has pushed my thoughts heavenward. Paul makes this wonderfully convicting statement in Philippians 3:20: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ..."

Can you imagine how fast a place would sell if it went on the market with the following description: "Perfect Home built by a Perfect Builder surrounded by Perfect

Perfect Home
built by a
Perfect Builder
surrounded by
Perfect Neighbors.

Neighbors. The neighborhood features no pain, no tears, no sin, no fear, no hunger, and God Himself will dwell there" (Revelation 21).

This is the very place that Jesus told His disciples that He would prepare for them while He was comforting them in the upper room (John 14:1-6). This is also the very place where all Christians will dwell forever. This is the place that Paul reminds us that our citizenship is in. My current house isn't my real home. Heaven is, and it's a perfect home that I'll live in forever with all of my fellow believers and I'll never want to leave. That home is permanent and while there is so much we don't know about heaven, it's far greater than what our minds

can even imagine.

When I meditate on my future home in Heaven, here are some quick thoughts that impact how I live, and I hope that they will impact you as well:

1. I'm currently not in heaven so that I can do the work that God has for me to do here. It must be important work so I need to be faithful to do it for God's glory. (Philippians 1:21, 1 Peter 2:11-12)
2. Just like the disciples in the upper room, I'm comforted by the reality that Jesus has a place prepared for me in His kingdom. The trials and sufferings of this world will one day end and it helps me to joyously persevere. (Philippians 4:4, Romans 8:28)
3. My home in heaven has been paid for in full by the blood of the Lamb. My faith in Jesus wipes out the debt that I owed God because of my sinfulness and my faith in Jesus allows God to credit Jesus' righteousness to my account. I have no mortgage payment in heaven. ...Jesus paid it all, so all to Him I owe! (1 Peter 3:18, 2 Corinthians 5:21)

Christians, when you find yourself persecuted, discouraged or overwhelmed, remember that this world is not our home. God has a wonderful place reserved for us to dwell forever. Run the race set before you with endurance knowing that our final resting place is guaranteed and glorious!

Nightmare at the Airport

Originally Published in the March 2000 Newsletter



Image courtesy of stockimages at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

It seemed like a simple enough assignment: pick up my brother at the St. Louis airport and bring him back to my home for the annual XL Board Meeting. With me, however, even the simplest task can be fraught with peril.

Oh, everything started off innocently enough: Rocky arrived from Dallas and we hopped in my Buick and headed for St. Louis. Entering the parking garage, I punched the button on the little parking ticket machine and nodded toward the sign warning people not to lose their ticket. I remember saying something along the lines of, "Why do they even bother with that sign, what sort of moron would lose their parking ticket?" (At this point you would do well to remember that the literary device I use most often to spice up these little bummers is called "foreshadowing.")

We walked into the terminal with half an hour to spare and began randomly scanning the various airlines for a flight number matching the one I had brilliantly remembered to jot down from my brother's notoriously short e-mail. (Andy is the kind of person who takes great pleasure in reducing his correspondence to one or two choice words which he gleefully places in the subject line. Several times I have actually clicked on the body of the email, supposing that it might contain additional information...how foolish of me!) This time, however, his penchant for brevity backfired — he had not included the name of the airline! "No problem," I had told Rock on the road, "St. Louis only has one main terminal and we know the city he's flying from." It soon became clear, however, that the "only main terminal" didn't have any flights even vaguely resembling the number I had copied. (You may ask why I bothered to copy the number when I could have printed the e-mail — actually, you may not ask; it's embarrassing!) It seemed that either the number was wrong, no planes were arriving from Cleveland at all, or St. Louis had sprouted another ter-

minal. Thirty minutes later, various credit card phone calls had made it apparent that all three were true! I had left one digit off the flight number, Andy's plane was still grounded in Cleveland, and it was scheduled to arrive at St. Louis' remote south terminal.

Just to make sure this information from home coincided with the airline in question, we decided to take a shuttle to the south terminal and check on the status of the plane. After waiting in subarctic temperatures for ten minutes, we finally dragged our hypothermic bodies onto the bus and headed south. (Only in St. Louis do they put the waiting area for the terminal shuttle in a spot where absolutely no warmth or comfort can possibly be obtained.) Upon arriving we discovered that my brother's plane was not doing anything which even vaguely resembled flying, and would probably not arrive until 11:00 pm. Since it was only eight-thirty, the best thing to do was take the shuttle back to the car and go in search of some ice-cream. The stress from my many mistakes of the evening could then be drowned in a large M&M Blizzard!

Arriving back at the north terminal I casually reached for my wallet to retrieve the carefully stored parking ticket. To my horror, I felt, not leather, but only the rough material of the back pocket of my jeans. Trying not to panic, I casually suggested that we check the car to see if I had left my wallet on the seat. By this time Rocky was trying very hard not to be condescending (and failing miserably). We raced to the car; no wallet. We ran all over the north terminal—to each of the many different phones we had used—still no wallet. In desperation, we forced ourselves outside to wait for yet another terminal shuttle in the drop off zone now fondly dubbed “The Arctic Circle.” To our amazement (and the grace of God) the next shuttle was able to locate and radio the driver of our previous bus, who identified the wallet, and promised to bring it by on his next run. Wonderful! This, however, meant another ten minutes of bonechilling cold at the Arctic Circle and small talk like, “So, can you think of any other fun mistakes you might make?” “Exactly how has an idiot like you survived all these years, Chris?” And, “You say your occupation involves organizing large numbers of teenagers and taking them on trips all over the country? How interesting.” To Rocky's credit, he was being very polite, but I could tell it was

We raced to the car; no wallet.

a struggle! Finally the wallet was shoved into my cold, lifeless hand and I knew the ordeal was finally over. We stumbled to the car. Reaching into my wallet to retrieve the parking ticket, I felt a wave of panic sweep through my barely heated body. You know the feeling – okay, maybe you don't – I'd explain, but it's too humiliating. No ticket, nada, nein, nyet, nope! “This can't be happening,” I thought, “only a moron could lose his parking tic-” I stopped short as the familiarity of those words (remember the foreshadowing!) hit home. We turned the Buick inside out (Rocky still struggling to be sympathetic) as car after car left in disgust when we didn't pull out of our parking space. With no recourse, I drove to the little exit booth and threw myself upon the mercy of the barely conscious attendant. After firing me a glance that pityingly summed up my IQ as roughly equivalent to boiled cabbage, the attendant spent roughly ten minutes making what appeared to be an identity check, security clearance, and police report all rolled into one.

Meanwhile, Rocky sank lower and lower in the passenger seat as the line behind us began to back up with alarming speed. Soon people everywhere were craning their heads to see what was wrong with the idiots in the Buick. After checking with the FBI, MI6, the NRA, and the IRS, the little arm thingy lifted. The fine? Ten times what I usually pay for the convenience of their parking garage.

Well, I did manage to drown my sorrows in a Blizzard, even though, by that time, the sum total of our cash amounted to less than \$2. Andy's plane arrived and after he and Rocky voted this the next Uth Bummer, the three of us pulled into my driveway around 1:30 am. Sighing with relief, I reached into my pocket for the house key and...

♦Chris Riser

Contact Us:

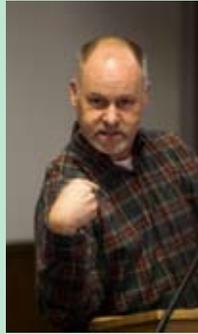
XL Ministries
PO Box 1173
Roanoke, TX 76262
www.xlministries.org
services@xlministries.org

XL Training

**2015 XL Training at Countryside Bible Church ~
Southlake, Texas
February 19th and 20th, 2015**

Dear XL family,
Please mark your calendars for the XL Training and Fellowship this coming February. We will be meeting together on Thursday and Friday, February 19th and 20th at Countryside Bible Church. Along with ministry encouragement and teaching, we will have opportunities for fellowship and friendship renewal. Topics to be addressed in the training sessions will include:

- Worship in the Church ~ Philosophy, Technology, Challenges and the Heart of Worship
- Resources on Staying Informed While Maintaining Your Schedule
- Absalom ~ Avoiding a Dangerous Pattern
- The Blessings and Challenges of Church Planting
- Family Discipleship with a Special Focus on Pastors
- Living Well Under the Ministry Magnifying Glass



We are once again blessed to be meeting on the two days prior to The Essentials Conference at Countryside Bible Church. The topic for this year's conference is Prayer and all are encouraged to attend. The conference will begin on Friday evening and



end on Sunday evening. Conference information, speakers, schedule and registration will soon be posted at www.countrysidebible.org and www.essentialconference.org.



Once again, we look forward to seeing as many of you as can make it for this sweet time of fellowship and encouragement from the Word and each other.

An Easy Way to Support XL

Do you shop at Amazon.com? If so, please consider using the Smile.Amazon.com site, and listing XL Ministries as the charity to support.

The AmazonSmile Foundation will make a small percentage donation to XL Ministries when you make qualifying purchases through Smile.Amazon.com. There is no increase in cost to you, and just about everything is a qualifying purchase!

The "Get started" link below will walk you through the easy process to select XL Ministries as your AmazonSmile charity. The link is also available under the Support XL tab at www.xlministries.org.



Other options to financially support XL:

- Go to www.xlministries.org, click "Support XL" and choose the PayPal link there. You can make a tax-deductible donation using a credit/debit card or your PayPal account.
- Send your tax-deductible donation to XL Ministries, PO Box 1173, Roanoke, TX 76262.

We are sincerely grateful for your participation with us, either in prayer or financially, as we seek to fulfill the command given in 2 Timothy 2:2:

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Thanks for your interest in and support of XL Ministries!

Amazon and the Amazon logo and AmazonSmile and the AmazonSmile logo are trademarks of Amazon.com, Inc. or its affiliates.