

## Transcript 186

Shea Houdmann

Welcome to the Got Questions podcast. Occasionally on our podcast, I like to invite an author on who's written a book that I have found interesting. And today that is definitely the case. So joining me today is Amy Baik Lee. She's the author of the Homeward Ache, how our yearning for the life to come spurs on our life today. So Amy, thank you for joining me today.

Amy Baik Lee

Thank you so much for having me on.

Shea Houdmann

I know you've done a bunch of interviews on your book, and congratulations on the book by the way, and again, it's it's excellent, strongly encourage our listeners to pick up a copy. We'll include links to where the book can be purchased in the YouTube description on the show notes and also at [podcast@gotquestions.org](mailto:podcast@gotquestions.org) when this episode goes live. But I could start with something really simple like Amy, what led you to write this book? But I'm not going to let you off quite that easy. What is the passion behind this book, or what led you to care so much about this issue that you had enough content to to come out of you to speak out that would make it book worthy?

Amy Baik Lee

Yeah, I think there was a, I have a personal I don't know if I would say affection, but personal passion for this topic of the homeward ache or the homeward longing, just because it's a thread that I find woven throughout my life. But I think the passion for writing the book has really been driven by getting to know the people that I'm writing for. And I'm writing for the people who are acquainted with the homeward longing, who have encountered it throughout their lives, and they feel the intensity of it but but don't know what to do with it. And so I keep coming back to that. From the earliest prayers in putting the manuscript together and putting the book proposal together to now, my prayers are continually for people who don't have a name for this kind of ache when they need it, but also the people who believe that it's rooted somehow in the Christian story. And it's rooted in the truth of Scripture. But they don't know if there's a way to more fully live out of the longing and out of the yearning that they feel and the disjointedness that they feel living in the present time versus what they would like to see come to fruition, which is God's restoration. So all of those folks together, I think are my passion.

Shea Houdmann

In reading your book and going through it, the verse that kept popping into my mind going through the book with Ecclesiastes 3:11 reads, that He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into Man's heart just so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. And to me this kind of communicates everyone has this connection to eternity, and yet there's like you said, there's something disjointed about it. We can't completely make sense of it. We know there's something more out there and we have a longing for it. We're not entirely sure what that is. And have you found to be that to be a universal human experience?

Amy Baik Lee

This was, I think one of those books that a writer can write and not know how widely or deeply it might resonate. I do believe that eternity is that God has placed eternity in the hearts of man, but I think we all respond to it in different ways sometimes. And for me it might have to do with my own temperament growing up in or growing up as a Christian. I think for a long time I had the impression that if you were to have a strong faith in God, and if you were following Christ that you had to lay all of your feelings by the wayside. And I think there's, you know, great truth to not letting our hearts mislead us and that our hearts can be deceptive. But I basically took the whole emotive experience of of, you know, being human and put that to the side. And one of the joys of putting this book together and going back over the stories in my life has been realizing that so many times it's been through sensing something before I could identify it, feeling the depth of that grief over things not being whole and healed. Those are the things that have been indications to me of the eternity that's in my heart. And so this book, I guess, is written to people who feel the same way, who sense eternity in that same way. So. So again, I I think that God has placed eternity in all of our hearts. I'm not sure if this is a longing that resonates to the same depth with everybody, I guess I can't speak for all humans. Yeah, yeah.

Shea Houdmann

Exactly. No one can. And there's there's numerous things in the human experience that are universal, but depending on so many factors, like so many things that have gone on in people's lives, that their personal beliefs are even something that is ultimately universal, which I I believe this connection to eternity is, can be denied, can be suppressed at the point that you really don't feel it. It's not. It's not a overwhelming power and like it's not a draw to.

Amy Baik Lee

Right.

Shea Houdmann

But what I found really interesting in your book is the struggle and coming up with a more adequate word to describe this. And I I've taken some German, so like the zenzot. Or even in Romanian, it's the word door. A couple of languages that have a word that you think comes close to describing it but I found numerous things in my life that I can't really find an English word that perfectly describes how I'm feeling or what I'm thinking on this, so you kind of got to kind of almost borrow from another language. So how does the zenezots? How does that communicate to you that like the main point that you're trying to get across in the book?

Amy Baik Lee

Well, it was a German word that had to be introduced to me through a British author, through CS Lewis. And and it was really his explanation and his unfolding of the definition of Saint Zook that helped me to understand what it was really. So I think he only uses it once in Surprised by Joy. But he's talking about the yearning that we sometimes encounter, that's deep, that's sweet, that's piercing. It's an odd kind of longing, in that once you encounter it like you want more of the longing, which is a strange thing to say. But other people have described it as a yearning for a place that you can't get to, or maybe even a place that you haven't been, but you just feel this very strong pull towards it. And so uhm, I was grateful to

come across Lewis and his introduction of that term, but I think I was even more grateful to hear, to read his story of how he encountered it and of what it meant to him in his life, because that was the point at which I said Ohh, I think I think I know what he's talking about. And it's this thing that I haven't thought about for years or I haven't really thought about specifically in an isolated sense, but now that he's telling his own story, I can look back in my life and identify moments when I've encountered it too. So yeah, I was grateful for that.

Shea Houdmann

So true. What are some of the, you mentioned different stories, different things that have unfolded in your life that particularly communicated this, this need that gave you this passion for what's next. This passion for eternity, this longing for the life to come.

Amy Baik Lee

Yeah, well, I start the book with the story of a a meadow that I saw when I was 9 or 10 years old. And I had gone on a walk with some of my family members up on the hill behind our house at the time. And we came up to the crest of the hill, and we were looking across at this other hillside and it had a meadow on it. And this is in the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Appalachian Mountains in the United States. And it was something in that site. And I'm not going to try to pick it apart and pinpoint scientifically what it might have been, but I remember the side of the meadow. And I remember the way the sunlight and the winds all combined. There was just something in that sight that made me want to stay there for a really long time. There was a an ineffable, inexpressible kind of peace and joy that was in that moment for me. And that's the earliest instance of that kind of longing that I can recall. But there were different moments throughout college. After I moved back to the states after we had gone to Korea. And there have just been different elements that I revisit later in, I think Chapter 15, like the call of wild geese and autumn, the sound of the sea, other hills and mountain, moments in literature, Narnia was like that. The Lord of the Rings was like that. That introduced, I think, a different depth of that holy longing for me. So those are some places that I've encountered it since then, yeah.

Shea Houdmann

And being a a huge fan of the Lord of the Rings series, I appreciated the times in the book that you talked about that, your comparison of which which character am I? I don't know how many times I've taken the test and I can't ever get it to tell me that I'm Aragorn, who's my favorite favorite character. But no matter how much I try to cheat, it still doesn't do it. But you know what? You're Amy, you're definitely a a wordsmith in terms of you've got amazing vocabulary and I love how you describe things using words that even make you think more about it. But you're very good at finding just the right word to describe. So that's one of the things I enjoyed the most about your book.

Amy Baik Lee

Thank you so much. Feel very inadequate, but yeah.

Shea Houdmann

Let me ask you a couple of questions related to different questions that we get at Got Questions about subjects related to eternity. And just recently I saw one it was along the lines of, they were describing someone who is so heavenly minded that they're of no earthly good. And this person is, all this person

cares about is they just want to get to heaven. They want to experience that perfection, that life with God, they dream of it. They desire to the point that their life in this world just pales in comparison. They almost don't care about anymore. And so I know that's the opposite of what you're pointing people to. You're wanting people through the Homeward Ache to spur on your life today, not to depress it. So how do you have the proper longing for eternity while not turning yourself into losing your passion for the life today.

Amy Baik Lee

Yeah, I think that works on multiple levels. There's a book by Anthony Esselin called Nostalgia, where he's describing somebody who's looking at, I want to say somebody in the Victorian ages who's looking at the ancient times with a nostalgic, overly nostalgic and romanticized view. And I think that's the kind of view that we can have of heaven. Especially if we have a vague idea of heaven, I feel like it's very easy for us to do that. It's more when we come into concrete terms and we realize that we're going to have physical bodies in the resurrection. And that we are going to feast. And that the modes of worship that we're engaging in now are still the modes of worship that we will engage in an eternity like creativity and curation and cultivation. So I feel like the more robust our theology is, the more it begins to bring home the fact that the life that we're to have there has begun now in the moment of our conversion and the moment of our coming to belong to Christ, we are already dwelling in the Heavenly realms. And we are already members of Christ's body.

Amy Baik Lee

And so I mean I think there is a certain perspective shift that happens so that the things that we're living through now do become more like, not less important exactly, but but illuminated with the light of eternity, so that things like grief and suffering come into the proper perspective. But I think the more we learn to walk and step with him, and the more that we're watching for him, then then I think what ought to happen and what does happen is with the help of the Holy Spirit we start to see the Kingdom as it shall be someday, but also the Kingdom that's breaking into our midst even now. And he gives us the eyes to see that and he gives us the charge and the responsibility to pay attention to it too, and to engage with it. So I think that's something that happens in our relationship with Christ as we walk with him step by step. We learn obedience. We learn to see him. We learn joy in the moment even as we hold the joy, the expectant joy of things to come.

Amy Baik Lee

So I agree that it can be problematic for us to be so heavenly minded that we're no earthly good, but I feel like if you're really awake to the life that you're living, you're going to run into the brokenness of the world enough that it drives you to his throne now, to ask for his help now. So I don't know everybody's journey is different, but but at least that is what happened in my case. And what I pray will continue to happen in my case and in the lives of the people that I know, and I'm trying to serve.

Shea Houdmann

For me, the recognition, understanding that there is perfection out there, that the God is perfect, the place he's preparing for us will be perfect. We will enjoy that experience for eternity, with God worshipping God with their those who join us there through faith in Christ. That should spur us on to want this world to be less like it is and more like what eternity would be to try to redeem the time we

have here, but with an eternal by pointing people to Christ and as the answer is that you too can have this Homeward Ache. And also the confidence, the assurance that you will get to experience it. But I have definitely met some people who I wouldn't say of no earthly good, but ever so heavenly minded that it just seems like they're they're so ready to already be there that they almost when they're I know that's the opposite attitude what you're going for in your book. So let me ask you one more common Got Questions question and this is not something you specifically cover in your book, but I don't think you'll have a problem answering it. Won't heaven eventually get boring if we're there for eternity? Would you answer that question?

Amy Baik Lee

I'm so glad you asked that question. I've been thinking about that recently. Again, I think that has to do with our current perceptions of heaven. And I think the easiest way, because I'm I'm constantly these days trying to think of how to explain things to my children. I think maybe the easiest way for me to put it is that well we are all familiar, I think with moments that we associate with like being a responsible Christian and maybe we think of that as like having a quiet time or going to church or maybe in the best of moments engaging with the body of Christ and singing together. And maybe that's what we imagine what heaven is going to be like. But we also all have moments, I think in our life where it may not be a Christian activity that we're thinking of. But I think we all have moments where we wish, I wish I had enough time to do this. You know, whether it's pursuing some mode of creativity or enjoying, I don't know you could be sitting in a concert and this is the most beautiful piece of music you've ever heard. And you could listen to it on repeat over and over again you think and not get tired of it forever. And I think that kind of gives us a hint as to what our appetite for eternity is like. That we were made not to be bound by time forever. So if we take our imaginations and we think of the best possible moments, the moments that have captivated us with joy or beauty or peace, and we think of how we wish we didn't have to die so that we could pursue certain things forever, then I think our imaginations get a little bit closer to what it might be like to live in the wholeness of eternity.

Amy Baik Lee

And I was reading worshipped by the book by DA Carson a couple of weeks ago. And he talks about how worship is not in the Christian life something that is limited to what we do in our Sunday services. It ought to be for the Christian everything that you do throughout the week. And so when we, when we live lives of worship, we're bringing everything under the umbrella. Or bringing every knitting everything into the fabric of living a life to the glory of God. So that will be eating and drinking and writing stories or, you know, playing with children or, you know, weaving or painting or taking photographs or all of these things are things that God has given us to do in his creation mandate to be fruitful. To enjoy and glorify him. And the world that he has made, and the things that he has placed in creation. So when you think of that, I think it becomes easier for us to imagine that's right, there are things that I wish I wasn't limited by 70-80 years on earth to do. There are things that I have an appetite to do and those are good things and those are things that he rejoices in with us. And anyway, that's where it helps my brain not to short it out quite as much when I anticipate doing those things in eternity and doing them alongside the one who has created them, yeah, that's what helps me at least.

Shea Houdmann

For sure, it's one of those things where I have absolutely no concern that heaven could ever be boring. I look at what the Bible says about it and what God the Bible says about the God who created it and is establishing it and ordaining it. I know it's not to be boring, but at the same time even the most enjoyable thing in this world eventually gets that way. But you got to remember we we will be different. We will be perfectly designed for the places perfectly designed for us. And that's that's the encouragement that sticks with me whenever someone kind of comes to us with that sort of question is like, we can't, yes, our our senses, is our life, our experience, our personality is not going to be wiped away in eternity, but just trust it's going to be different. And trust the God who's creating creating it and has created it that it will be perfect in every sense of the word and enjoyable eternally, not just temporarily.

Amy Baik Lee

Yes, yes.

Amy Baik Lee

Yeah. And we'll have the appetite to see it or the ability to see it, you know, like when he calls us to become more like children. I think part of having a child like heart is having that attitude of wonder. And so we, in our best moments here, I think when we're full of wonder or gratitude or delight will have a much greater capacity for that, I think. But that is exactly the sort of thing that we can start practicing having now and that I think he desires for us now. So it's something that we can put into practice and make stronger as we're here.

Shea Houdmann

Yeah, Amy for my final question for you I thought might be super easy or maybe not, but I it's taking the title of your book and your subtitle, how does the Homeward Ache, yearning for the life to come, spur on our life today?

Amy Baik Lee

Well, on the part of the author, I will say it's more of a prayer that it will spur on the life of those who are reading it today in their present lives. And I think the way that, that happens is when we recognize that the homeward ache and everything that has fed it, all of the memories that are too tender for us to talk about, and the joy that we've encountered that's so deep that it almost brings us to tears, when we recognize that the ache itself and the occurrences that have brought about are from Christ, then I think we begin to lean into our journey with him more trustingly, more you know, deeply. And it allows us to recognize that when he says he's going to be with us to the end of the age, he means it and that and that the ache is there because he intends to bring it to into the fullness of the healing that it beckons us toward. So I think that's what the ache is designed to do. And I think the joy of following that path helps us to come into deeper understanding of his love for us, and hopefully also deeper understanding of how we can love him back. And as we respond to that, that's what will ultimately transform and enrich our lives.

Shea Houdmann

Thank you. I mean again I truly enjoyed the book enjoyed. I enjoyed reading authors who use words where I I occasionally need to actually look them up in a dictionary to make sure I'm properly

understanding them right. And I 100% mean that as the highest compliment. Your book made me think and I there's not a whole lot of books I've read lately that I actually had to put down and like really think through what you're saying and how it how it resonates with me, how I've seen it exemplified in the lives of others. So. So thank you so much. And do you have any plans to write any additional books or is this is this it for you?

Amy Baik Lee

I am praying about it I guess. I've laid it open to the Lord and I'm this as much as this book was a step of obedience, I'm just waiting to see what he says is next.

Shea Houdmann

Awesome. Let me know I it will work its way to the top of my to read list them pretty quickly.

Amy Baik Lee

OK. Thank you.

Shea Houdmann

So this has been the Got Questions podcast with Amy Baik Lee, the author of the Homeward Ache, how our yearnings for the life to come spurs on our life today. So Amy, thank you again for joining me. It's been a pleasure just discussing this book with you.

Amy Baik Lee

Thank you.

Amy Baik Lee

Thank you so much. I so enjoyed this conversation.

Shea Houdmann

And we'll like I said earlier, we will include links to where the book can be purchased and the show notes at the description of this video goes on YouTube and also at [podcast.gotquestions.org](http://podcast.gotquestions.org). Got questions? The Bible has answers and we'll help you find them.