

Salvation Belongs to the Lord (Glorification – Part 1)

Look with me to Rom. 8:28-30: **“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”** Today we come to the very end of God’s work of salvation: glorification. ***“Those whom he justified he also glorified.”***

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Brothers and sisters the plan of God is nothing short of glory. God is glorious! And God will glorify his people! And as the word says, there is no doctrine in the Bible greater, as applies to us, than the fact that God will glorify sinners. And, as we will see, this “glorification” includes all of creation. And, all of this comes from the plan and design of the Father, carried out by and through the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit! And let me say from the beginning that this glorious doctrine is full of mystery! On glorification, Sinclair Ferguson says, *“this subject takes us to the outer limits of Christian knowledge, and leaves us like men standing on the shore watching a boat disappear over the horizon onto an experience at which we can only begin to guess.”* (*The Christian Life*, p. 191). I remember visiting the Great Barrier Reef, in my bathing suit with my flippers, mask, and snorkel. What a beautiful sight on top of the reef! But, as I came to the end and peered over into the depths of the Pacific, an awful mystery came over me! In the same kind of way, such is the doctrine of glorification. Let me give you my plan for the 3 sermons I will preach on this topic. Today, I only have time to emphasize two main parts, which I will call part 1 and part 2 and part 1 really serves as an introduction. Here they are: 1) The glory received at death is not the same as what will happen at glorification; and 2) Glorification is associated and bound up with the 2nd coming of Christ. (we will continue the 2nd part next week). But let’s begin.

1. Glory received at death is not the same as glorification. Another way to put this is to say that our state of glory as a Christian is not the same at death as what it will be at glorification. When one of our brothers or sisters dies, we often say or hear the words, *“he/she has gone over into glory.”* Or we sing songs like *“Beulah Land”* or *“When We All Get to Heaven.”* Now, I believe it is true that a believer does enter “glory” at death. And it is ok to sing such songs. But, this is not the end of “glory,” this is not the same as the final glorification that is to come. This is not the full meaning of Paul’s words, ***“Those whom he justified, he also glorified.”*** The end of our salvation is not merely what happens at death; there is more to come. In Christ, God will bring all things to an end.

Let me give a couple pictures. Though I do not eat them often, I love Krispy Kreme Donuts. And at my age, maybe ½ or 1 donut is about all I can do. But, I still think back to my high school days when I would go with my friends down to Salisbury to find the “hot and ready” light on at KK. And after buying a couple dozen (very cheap in those days) we would eat 5 or 6 a piece, and

still have the same physique. Well, in the same kind of way, I compare the glory we will receive at death as merely ½ donut. In the final glorification, we will not only get the 2 dozen donuts, but we will get them anytime we want. And more, we will become franchise owners, even owners of the company. And, even as we eat more and more, our physique will not suffer. This is a poor illustration because it does little to compare the difference. And Paul says there is no comparison.

Let me give another anyway. When I plant my garden, the goal is not just to see a healthy seed planted in the ground to turn into a nice mature green plant (though this is pretty cool). And the goal is not merely to see fruit begin to grow. The goal is mature fruit that can be picked off the plant and enjoyed. In the same kind of way, the glory that begins at new life in Christ and then even death, is not the same glory that will be revealed at glorification. There is more to come. God will bring us ALL the way to glory!

Brothers and sisters, at death, what do we receive? Paul says **“To live is Christ, and to die is gain”** (Phil. 1:21). What do we gain? We are made perfect in holiness. We pass immediately into the presence of the Lord. To be absent from the body is to be present with Him (2 Cor. 5:8). Jesus told the thief on the cross, **“Today you will be with me in paradise”** (Luke 23:43). In Heb. 12:23, concerning the spirits of departed saints, they are **“the spirits of just men made perfect.”** At death we are freed from a body of sin. As Paul says in Rom. 7:24, speaking in the context of remaining sin: **“Who shall deliver me from this body of death.”** At death we will be free from the troubles of this life. You will no longer hear me say, *“Life is short and full of troubles.”* No more cares from this life, no more fears from this life. No more labors from this life. No more suffering. No more temptation. No more sorrow. You will no longer weary. Because all of these things will cease, we will experience rest.

I believe, at death, we will see God in Christ as He is. There will be no need for faith. I believe we will see him intellectually. We will behold the glorified body of the Lord Jesus. I believe we will know the saints who have gone before us. I believe we will see the angels and have some type of harmony. Though there is great mystery here, there are Scriptures to support everything I just said (and more). When we die we will enter into glory! (I’ll speak more about this over the next two weeks.)

Application: Think and meditate on these kinds of things. When you do, you will find great comfort. Your faith and your hope will be strengthened. There is great gain in death! Even glory!

However, what I just described is not the END of our glory. There is much more to come. And, what is to come even beyond what I have just described cannot find a proper comparison! In Rom. 8:17-18 Paul says: **“and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”**

This is why my two illustrations do very little to communicate what is STILL YET TO COME. **“Those he justified, he also glorified.”** So, my question is: What is yet to come? And, When does the Bible say that glorification finds its culmination, its end? The answer is simple: Our glorification will take place at the 2nd coming of Jesus, which brings us to our 2nd part.

2. Glorification is associated and bound up with the 2nd coming of Christ. Listen to our confession: *“Of the World to Come We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.”* Now, this statement doesn’t say everything about glorification. There are soooo many good Christian confessions (I read many of them this week.) And on this subject they all agree. They agree that Jesus Christ is coming back a 2nd time; and this will be the final glorification.

In Acts 1, after the resurrection and appearing of Jesus, we read: **“So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven” (Acts 1:6-11).** There are so many verses that speak of Jesus’ 2nd coming. When we take the Lord’s Supper and repeat the words of Paul from 1 Cor. 11:26, we are reminded that we are to continue this ordinance **“until He comes.”**

Now, for our purpose this morning, I want to restate the fact that glorification (not just the glorious truths that will happen at the death of God’s saints) will find its culmination, its fulfillment, at the 2nd coming of Christ. And at his coming some very important things will happen. I will mention 3: 1) There will be a resurrection of the dead; 2) There will be a final vindication of God in judgment; and 3) There will be a renewal of creation. (I will only have time to preach this first truth today. We will wait for next week for the next 2.)

1. Concerning the resurrection of the dead, it is true that those who are in Christ are alive with Him NOW. The same power that rose Christ from the dead is the same power that works in us NOW. By the power of the Holy Spirit we are born again. God has taken our heart of stone and given us a heart of flesh. And NOW we are seated with Him in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). But what happens when we die? Well, our spirits are separated from our bodies. Our bodies go back to the dust. This HAS happened and WIL happen to every one that dies. And though it is GAIN to die (as we’ve seen), there is NO COMPLETION to our redemption until we are united

with the body, until we are given a new “resurrection” body. This is why Paul says in Rom. 8:23-25 though we **“have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”** In other words, at the 2nd coming of Christ, there will be a resurrection which results in a resurrection body. Christ is our example. He is called the “firstfruits.” He rose from the dead, having a glorious body. And so it will be with us. And this will happen at his 2nd coming.

Turn with me to 1 Cor. 15. Let’s look at a few verses starting in v. 20 **“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”**

Now look down to v. 50: **“I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” (1 Cor. 15:50-55)**

Concerning those who see glorification at death, John Murray says this: *“It is to dishonour Christ and to undermine the nature of the Christian hope to substitute the blessedness upon which believers enter at death for the glory that is to be revealed when “this corruptible will put on incorruption and this mortal will put on immortality” (1 Cor. 15:54). Preoccupation with the event of death indicates a deflection of faith, of love, and of hope. We who have the firstfruits of the Spirit “groan within ourselves,: the apostle reminds us, ‘waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23).*

Brothers and sisters, because of sin, we are separated from God. Because of sin, when we die our bodies are separated from our souls. And until this is put right, victory is not complete. And it seems clear to me that, in Christ, this event will happen for All the people of God at his coming; God has designed it this way. And for that moment, those alive, those in the grave, and even all of creation WAITS for this glorious day. This will be the day of glorification. And in this day, our hope rests! We can say with the Apostle Paul: **“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing**

salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ . . .” (Tit. 2:11-13)

Now, I look forward to next week as I continue this subject. (final vindication & renewal of creation).

But for today, what are some applications we can take home.

1. We still wait for this day. As I’ve just read from Paul to Titus: we are **“waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”** And by faith in this great promise, the promise found in the Word of God, we continue in this life.

2. This day is worth the wait. Yes, there will be great glory at death. There will be gain. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). But, in the 2nd coming of Christ ALL things will be put right. We will have glorified bodies; soul, body together. Final judgment. God will finally be vindicated. (Sin, death, and the devil will be no more.) All of creation will be made new! Brothers and sisters, I believe this is beyond our comprehension! But, by faith, in hope, we continue! So press on in this life! God will make all things right one day. Finally,

3. These promises are yes in Christ. In other words, what God has promised in his word, he will bring to pass. Why? John 3:16 **“For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life.”** The Son of God took on flesh. He lived a perfect sinless life. He died on the cross as a sacrifice for sinners. He rose again! (I cannot preach this sermon unless Christ is risen from the dead!). He ascended to heaven where He now sits at the right hand of God, praying for his people. He has given us the Holy Spirit in power to be his witnesses until He comes. And one day, He will return! And those who he justifies, he will also glorify! If you are a Christian today, there is NO CHANCE you will not be glorified! God will bring you to glory!