

Week 11: Final Victory Over Sickness and Death

Description: God works all things together for our good, including sickness and death. Sickness and death, however, are not natural parts of life. They entered the world through sin. They are a curse. When Christ died and rose again he conquered sickness and death. In Christ, therefore, we have the hope of eternal life. And this hope is holistic. It involves not only the redemption of our souls, but also the redemption of our weak, frail, and mortal bodies.

Chapter 17 (Romans 8:32)

- What does the Scripture not mean when it says God “will give us all good things (53)?”
- What does the Scripture mean when it says God “will give us all good things (53)?”
- What does the Scripture mean when it says, we can “do all things” through Christ – Philippians 4:12-19 (53)?

Chapter 18 (Matthew 8:16-17)

- Why is disease in the world – Romans 8:20 (54)?
- How did Jesus overcome disease (55)?

Chapter 40 (1 Thessalonians 5:10)

- Is God against the Body (98)?
- What happens to our souls after they die while they await the resurrection (99)?

Chapter 41 (Romans 6:5)

- Why does Jesus have the right to take the keys of death and to open the door for all who follow him through faith (101)?

FIFTY REASONS WHY
JESUS CAME TO DIE

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TO OBTAIN FOR US ALL THINGS THAT ARE GOOD FOR US



*He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all,
how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*

ROMANS 8:32

I love the logic of this verse. Not because I love logic, but because I love having my real needs met. The two halves of Romans 8:32 have a stupendously important logical connection. We may not see it, since the second half is a question: “How will he not also with him give us all things?” But if we change the question into the statement that it implies, we will see it. “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, *will therefore surely* also with him graciously give us all things.”

In other words, the connection between the two halves is meant to make the second half absolutely certain. If God did the hardest thing of all—namely, give up his own Son to suffering and death—then it is certain that he will do the comparatively easy thing, namely, give us all things with him. God’s total commitment to give us all things is more sure than the sacrifice of his Son. He gave his Son “for us all.” That done, could he stop being for us? It would be unthinkable.

But what does “give us all things” mean? Not an easy life of comfort. Not even safety from our enemies. We know this from what the Bible says four verses later: “For your sake we are being

killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered” (Romans 8:36). Many Christians, even today, suffer this kind of persecution. When the Bible asks, “Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword” separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35), the answer is no. Not because these things don’t happen to Christians, but because “in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).

What then does it mean that because of Christ’s death for us God will certainly with him graciously give us “all things”? It means that he will give us all things that are good for us. All things that we really need in order to be conformed to the image of his Son (Romans 8:29). All things we need in order to attain everlasting joy.

It’s the same as the other biblical promise: “My God will supply *every need* of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). This promise is clarified in the preceding words: “In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and *hunger*, abundance and *need*. I can do *all things* through him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:12-13).

It says we can do “all things” through Christ. But notice “all things” includes “hungering” and “needing.” God will meet every real need, including the ability to rejoice in suffering when many felt needs do not get met. God will meet every real need, including the need for grace to hunger when the felt need for food is not met. The suffering and death of Christ guarantee that God will give us all things that we need to do his will and to give him glory and to attain everlasting joy.

TO HEAL US FROM MORAL AND PHYSICAL SICKNESS



*Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his stripes we are healed.*

Isaiah 53:5

[He] healed all who were sick.

*This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:
“He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.”*

Matthew 8:16-17

Christ suffered and died so that disease would one day be utterly destroyed. Disease and death were not part of God’s original way with the world. They came in with sin as part of God’s judgment on creation. The Bible says, “The creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope” (Romans 8:20). God subjected the world to the futility of physical pain to show the horror of moral evil.

This futility included death. “Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin” (Romans 5:12). It included all the groaning of disease. And Christians are not excluded: “Not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit [that is, those who trust Christ], groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (Romans 8:23).

But all this misery of disease is temporary. We look forward to a time when bodily pain will be no more. The subjection of cre-

ation to futility was not permanent. From the very beginning of his judgment, the Bible says God aimed at hope. His final purpose was this: “that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Romans 8:21).

When Christ came into the world, he was on a mission to accomplish this global redemption. He signaled his purposes by healing many people during his lifetime. There were occasions when the crowds gathered and he “healed all who were sick” (Matthew 8:16; Luke 6:19). This was a preview of what was coming at the end of history when “he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore” (Revelation 21:4).

The way Christ defeated death and disease was by taking them on himself and carrying them with him to the grave. God’s judgment on the sin that brought disease was endured by Jesus when he suffered and died. The prophet Isaiah explained the death of Christ with these words: “He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and *with his stripes we are healed*” (Isaiah 53:5). The horrible blows to the back of Jesus bought a world without disease.

One day all disease will be banished from God’s redeemed creation. There will be a new earth. We will have new bodies. Death will be swallowed up by everlasting life (1 Corinthians 15:54; 2 Corinthians 5:4). “The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox” (Isaiah 65:25). And all who love Christ will sing songs of thanks to the Lamb who was slain to redeem us from sin and death and disease.

SO THAT WE WOULD BE
WITH HIM IMMEDIATELY
AFTER DEATH



*[He] died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep
we might live with him.*

1 Thessalonians 5:10

*To live is Christ, and to die is gain. . . .
I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart
and be with Christ, for that is far better.*

Philippians 1:21, 23

*We would rather be away from the body
and at home with the Lord.*

2 Corinthians 5:8

The Bible does not view our bodies as bad. Christianity is not like some ancient Greek religions that treated the body as a burden to be gladly shed. No, death is an enemy. When our bodies die, we lose something precious. Christ is not against the body, but for the body. The Bible is clear on this: “The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body” (1 Corinthians 6:13). This is a wonderful statement: The Lord is for the body!

But we must not go so far as to say that without the body we can have no life and consciousness. The Bible does not teach this.

Christ died not only to redeem the body, but also to bind the soul so closely to himself that, even without the body, we are with him. This is a huge comfort in life and death, and Christ died so that we would enjoy this hope.

On the one hand the Bible talks about losing the body in death as a kind of nakedness for the soul: “While we are still in this tent [=the body], we groan . . . not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed” (2 Corinthians 5:4). In other words, we would rather move straight from here to the resurrection body with no in-between time when our bodies are in the grave. That’s what those will experience who are alive when Christ returns from heaven.

But on the other hand, the Bible celebrates the in-between time, when our souls are in heaven and our bodies are in the grave. This is not the final glory, but it is glorious. We read, “To live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). “Gain”! Yes, loss of the body for a season. In a sense, “unclothed.” But more than anything else, “gain”! Why? Because death for the Christian will mean coming home to Christ. As the apostle Paul says: “My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better” (Philippians 1:23).

“Far better”! Not yet in every way the best. That will come when the body is raised in health and glory. But still “far better.” We will be with Christ in a way that is more intimate, more “at home.” So the early Christians said, “We would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). Those of us who believe in Christ do not go out of existence when we die. We do not go into a kind of “soul sleep.” We go to be with Christ. We are “at home.” It is “far better.” It is “gain.”

This is one of the great reasons Christ suffered. “[He] died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him” (1 Thessalonians 5:10). Sleep-like, the body lies there in the grave. But we live with Christ in heaven. This is not our final hope. Someday the body will be raised. But short of that, to be with Christ is precious beyond words.

Why Jesus Came to Die:

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TO SECURE OUR RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD



*For if we have been united with him in a death like his,
we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.*

ROMANS 6:5

*If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,
he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to
your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

ROMANS 8:11

*If we have died with him,
we will also live with him.*

2 TIMOTHY 2:11

The keys of death were hung on the inside of Christ's tomb. From the outside, Christ could do many wonderful works, including raising a twelve-year-old girl and two men from the dead—only to die again (Mark 5:41-42; Luke 7:14-15; John 11:43-44). If any were to be raised from the dead, never to die again, Christ would have to die for them, enter the tomb, take the keys, and unlock the door of death from the inside.

The resurrection of Jesus is God's gift and proof that his death was completely successful in blotting out the sins of his people and removing the wrath of God. You can see this in the word "therefore." Christ was "obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. *Therefore* God has highly exalted him"

(Philippians 2:8-9). From the cross the Son of God cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30). And by means of the resurrection, God the Father cries, "It was finished indeed!" The great work of paying for our sin and providing our righteousness and satisfying God's justice was finished in the death of Jesus.

Then, in the grave, he had the right and the power to take the keys of death and open the door for all who come to him by faith. If sin is paid for, and righteousness is provided, and justice is satisfied, nothing can keep Christ or his people in the grave. That's why Jesus shouts, "I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades" (Revelation 1:18).

The Bible rings with the truth that belonging to Jesus means we will be raised from the dead with him. "If we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Romans 6:5). "Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thessalonians 4:14). "God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power" (1 Corinthians 6:14).

Here's the connection between Christ's death and our resurrection: "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law" (1 Corinthians 15:56). Which means, we have all sinned, and the law sentences sinners to everlasting death. But the text continues, "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 57). In other words, the demand of the law is met by Jesus' life and death. Therefore, sins are forgiven. Therefore, the sting of sin is removed. Therefore, those who believe in Christ will *not* be sentenced to everlasting death, but will "be raised imperishable . . . then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory'" (1 Corinthians 15:52, 54). Be astonished, and come to Christ. He invites you: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).