

The Benefits of Justification – Part 3

By David Harrell

Romans 5:1-11

We return once again to Paul's epistle to the Romans, Romans chapter five. We are looking at the third in a series on the benefits of our justification.

Let me read to you just the first five verses this morning.

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.¹

Have you noticed that the whole world seems to want to live in America? Millions come every year, many of them illegally. And, you might ask, "Well, I wonder really why are they coming?"

Of course the answer is: To pursue the American dream, whatever that is. The American dream which is kind of the national ethos of the United States, a fundamental trait that is shared by virtually every American. Many even consider themselves to be entitled to it.

And what is this dream? What is it that everyone is hoping and even expecting to find in America? Well, at some level it is an abundant life here on earth, a life of freedom and joy and pleasure and wealth. In fact, this is even etched in the stone of our Declaration of Independence that declares that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, especially that right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

So, yes, come to America, the land of freedom and opportunity, the land where you can be prosperous if you are smart and you work hard. But, frankly, today, even if you are dumb and you don't work at all the government will take care of you.

Yes, the American dream is a powerful motivator. But obviously it doesn't fully satisfy. It doesn't always deliver. Many people are pursuing it and they still are terribly unhappy. Millions play the lottery to get rich hoping that somehow they will find life in material things. Millions of others try to find light through immorality, pornography, all manner of things are available. Millions of others are so disillusioned with life they are just so unhappy that they resort to the anesthetizers of life to somehow alleviate the pain: drugs, alcohol. And others just entertain themselves to death.

But life goes on and the hope dies hard.

¹ Romans 5:1-5.

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Seizing upon this elusive dream our current president was elected on his promise of hope and change which has turned out to be a disaster. Instead of Utopia, we are watching the systematic demolition of everything that once made this country great. People are becoming desperate. You look at the polls. You look at all of the factors that would somehow give measurement to what is going on in the culture of our country and you will find that people are afraid.

What happens when there is no more America?

Someone has said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Yet this is exactly what human kind has done throughout history and we are ready to do it yet again in our next election cycle.

Think about it. Like fools, millions of people will try to fulfill their earthly hopes and their earthly dreams by electing another human savior who will offer his or her version of hope and change. And the results will always be the same. In the end it will be disappointment and, in most cases, disasters.

Politicians perpetuate this endless cycle of futility and broken promises and dashed hopes. And you would think that eventually man would learn. But they don't know what the alternative is. At least they don't want the alternative. Of course, the alternative is to trust in God, not in man, to worship the Creator, not the creature. Don't keep looking to yet another human savior, but place your faith in the only Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will not disappoint.

But sadly millions will try to find God apart from faith in the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ and they will fall prey to some religious system that will tell them if you do certain works then you will ultimately be acceptable to God. You will find favor with him.

And, of course, we know from Scripture that that is impossible, that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone. And this is the apostle's central message in his epistle to the Romans. This is how man finds something infinitely greater than this elusive American dream or whatever hope that you have of finding life through whatever on earth or through God as you seem to think he might be. This is how man can find eternal life, real life.

In John 10 Jesus says, "I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly."²

And in 1 John five verse 11 we read that God has given us, "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life."³

And, folks, the exciting thing is for those of us who have been united to Christ by faith. This abundant life begins now. Even though life will be filled with a myriad of trials, our

² John 10:10.

³ 1 John 5:11.

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life will never succumb to discouragement, to despair. Instead, it will yield the sweet joys of thanksgiving. And one day this life is going to explode into a reality that we cannot imagine, something beyond our comprehension. One day we are going to experience a dimension that exceeds our imagination's ability to even comprehend. We are going to examine that today. And the key for a man to one day experience all that God has for him, something that can begin now, but ultimately blossom in eternity, the key to all of that is what Paul tells us here in Romans chapter five and verse one. You must be justified by faith.

And at the moment of the new birth, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. We are declared to be righteous. We are acceptable to God. We enter into a relationship with him. He takes up permanent residence in us. One moment we were under the wrath of God and the next moment God looks upon us in the same way as he looks upon his dear Son. And as a result of this supernatural transaction, every believer can instantly begin to enjoy the unfathomable benefits of justification.

And in the first 11 verses here in Romans chapter five, we learn of nine benefits of this divine gift of justification that every believer possesses. There are those that he speaks of that we have in the present and one that we shall have in the future.

By way of review we have learned, thus far, that, first of all, we have peace with God, verse one.

“Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁴

Again, the reality here is that instantly when we come to know Christ the wrath of God that once condemned the unbeliever is forever satisfied and the sinner's war with God and God's war with him is instantly over because now he has been declared righteous and he will be treated as such. And there is no higher court in the universe that can overturn that verdict.

But not only do we have peace with God, but, secondly, we have access to God, verse two.

“...through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith.”⁵

Before man is justified the corruption of his greatest righteousness is so vile that he could never enter into the presence of a holy God. But because of Christ who brings that introduction, who leads us in that introduction, the moment a man is justified the guilt of sin is permanently removed, past, present and future. The righteous wrath of God against sin is forever satisfied and the sinner then has been perfectly cleansed by the blood of the Lamb and therefore he is able to stand in the presence of God's glory blameless with great joy.

⁴ Romans 5:1.

⁵ Romans 5:2.

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But that is not all. Having been clothed with the righteousness of Christ, thirdly, we have learned that we also have a permanent standing before God in verse two.

We have obtained, it says, “our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand.”⁶

The term “stand” means to be established, to be fixed in a place so as never to be moved. And what is this place in which we stand firm, established, never to be moved? It is the position of grace. And because of this permanent standing of grace, our lives this side of glory will be characterized by assurance as we learned last week. We should never doubt the security of our salvation and the assurance of our salvation. It will be characterized by the blessings that we will receive as God’s adopted children. We are now children of the king. We have access to the almighty. We are standing in grace, standing as a part of this family. We have a seat at the table just like we would have a seat in the table of our family.

In fact, Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:6 that God has raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

So we have assurance. We have blessing. We also have confidence. With such assurance and the promise of blessing, our prayer life and our testimony should absolutely exude confidence. And finally we have a devotion to the glory of God, the lover of our souls.

So that is what we have studied thus far. And now we come to the fourth magnificent benefit of justification, one that not only has implications for our life after death, but has implications right now for each and everyone of us who know and love Christ. And I have labeled this particular benefit, this fourth benefit jubilant hope of glory.

Notice verse two again.

He says, “Through whom,” referring to Christ, “also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.”⁷

Friends, here is the real message of hope and change. If you want hope, you have got to be changed. And God will do the changing by his grace.

You will recall that Paul has told us in Romans three and verse 23 that all “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”⁸

Grammatically that is in the present tense meaning that all are continuously falling short. Moreover, because the verb is in the middle voice it indicates that the cause of our dreadful condition of sin is not something outside of us, but from within. It is because of our sin nature that we are continuously falling short of this glory. We were meant to

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Roman 5:2.

⁸ Romans 3:23.

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reflect the glory of God. We were meant to experience the glory of God. But what the sin nature has prevented, justification has made possible.

I want you to notice, again, this phrase in verse two. And think of it this way. Because we are at peace with God, because we have access to God, because we have a permanent standing in grace, he says, “We exult in hope of the glory of God.”⁹

The word “exult” is the word *καυχασθαι* (kow-khah'-om-ah-ee) in the original language. And it can be translated “top rejoice, to revel, to boast, to glory on account of a thing.” And in this context we could paraphrase it this way. Paul is saying, “You need to jump for joy in sheer jubilation when you reflect upon your immovable standing in grace that is the basis of your confident hope of future bliss.”

We have a divinely granted, a divinely guarded salvation that anchors our hope of one day sharing in the glory of God. And this is what I want to talk with you about this morning. In order for you to grasp these truths, to allow them to deeply impact your soul, I wish to examine the record of Scripture in other places that helps expand upon this simple phrase.

“We exult in hope of the glory of God.”¹⁰

You know, friends, many times we are in too big of a hurry when we study Scripture. We come to a little phrase like this and we kind of hurry on to the next phrase. We kind of see, you know, what is going on. But we need to be like my little grand boys. They see a grasshopper and what do they do? I mean the whole world shuts down. It is time to get close and inspect this thing. That is what we need to do here.

And as we inspect what Paul is saying by looking at other passages of Scripture we are going to understand some amazing truths that we can apply to our lives right now. We will look at a variety of eternal blessings. But I wish to summarize them under the context of just two headings. There are two events that await us, that await every justified saint that we will experience.

Number one. We are going to experience an unrestricted, personal fellowship with the triune God. And, secondly, we are going to experience a personal transformation into the glory of Christ. This is why we exult in hope of the glory of God.

Beloved, the reality of this should greatly impact how we live today. It certainly governed the apostle’s life, the apostle Paul’s life.

Notice how these truths emerge from other passages. First of all, let’s look at this idea of having an unrestricted personal fellowship with the triune God. My, what an

⁹ Romans 5:2.

¹⁰ Ibid.

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unsurpassable moment that will be. Jesus made this clear when he spoke of the blessings that belong to the redeemed in Matthew chapter five and verse eight.

He said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall [what?] see God.”¹¹

Now how do you have purity of heart? Well, that is the result of justification. The Holy Spirit speaks of this unrestricted personal fellowship with the triune God again in 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

In verse 12 we read, “For now we see in a mirror dimly,” Paul tells us, “but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.”¹²

The word “know” is interesting in the original language. It comes from a term *epiginwskw* (ep-ig-in-ocē'-ko) and it means to become thoroughly acquainted with something. It means to accurately and intimately perceive and understand. And this *epiginwskw* (ep-ig-in-ocē'-ko) is a term that is used in other places to speak of this incredible concept of knowing something that is way beyond what we would think of in terms of a casual acquaintance of something, but it is to know something intimately and accurately.

And what Paul was saying here in 1 Corinthians 13 is even with Scripture and even with the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit within us, we cannot fully see God. We don't really see the face of God. We see an imperfect reflection of him even as the ancients would have done when they looked into the mirrors that they made of polished metal.

He says now we only know in part, the idea of through the Word of God. But one day, to whatever extent, God will allow a justified human being to know him fully, we are going to know him fully. Think about that. It says just as he fully and intimately knows us, and he obviously knows us very well. He created us. He saved us. he lives within us.

And obviously this will be another dimension of reality that is beyond our ability to comprehend.

It is beyond the realm of time and space. But imagine this. Not only will we see the glory of God when we see him face to face, but we shall have the same kind of intimate understanding of his person, of his character likened to the knowledge that he has of us.

“...then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.”¹³

It is staggering, isn't it? It is thrilling. It is motivating. No wonder Paul says, “I want you to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

¹¹ Matthew 5:8.

¹² 1 Corinthians 13:12.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 13:12.

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In other words, “I want you to be consumed with sheer jubilation when you reflect upon the immovable standing that is yours in grace that guarantees that all of this is going to one day come to fruition.”

Dear Christian, you simply must have a vision of God. Not only a vision that comes from an understanding of the Word of God, that gives us at least some measure of who he is, but we also have to have a vision that is constantly being rehearsed in the secret recesses of our imagination, that is constantly evoking a sense of wonder, a sense of awe, a sense of praise.

Beloved, we have got to stay lost in the wonder of it all. One day faith will turn to sight.

So Paul is saying, “Never lose the sense of exhilaration.”

“Exult in hope of the glory of God.”¹⁴

A certain hope that one day you will be in the very presence of the Creator and the Sustainer and the Consummator of all things and then you shall know fully just as you also have been known fully.

Could you imagine how encouraging these words must have been to those early saints there in the churches in Rome when they read this and others, new believers? My, what encouraging words. Those who were experiencing mounting ridicule and persecution.

Now, bear in mind that Paul had already experienced some measure of this when he penned these words to Rome. So he knew exactly what awaited them. In fact, he describes this unrestricted personal fellowship with the triune God in 2 Corinthians chapter 12. We will not take time, but if you read the first 10 verses you will learn that he says that in the first verse that 14 years earlier he says that he was caught up to the third heaven. He was snatched up, the same word that is used of the rapture of the Church. He was snatched up. He was taken up somehow.

Verse three says of 2 Corinthians 12, “whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows.”¹⁵

He says, “[I] was caught up into Paradise, and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.”¹⁶

So he is describing a foreign reality here, an existence that we cannot comprehend. And he cannot tell us what he saw. The Scripture doesn’t tell us why, but I would imagine it is safe to assume the reason he doesn’t tell us is because we would have no frame of

¹⁴ Romans 5:2.

¹⁵ 2 Corinthians 12:3.

¹⁶ 2 Corinthians 12:4.

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reference to even understand what he was trying to say if he could tell us. He could only tell us what he heard.

And notice, he says that he heard “inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.”¹⁷

Perhaps this refers to a totally foreign language, a totally foreign means of communication. But he obviously understood what was said because he tells us that he was not permitted to tell us what he heard.

But it is interesting. If we look at other writings of Paul we get some sense of what he saw, some sense of what he experienced, things so exceedingly magnificent, so ineffable, so unfathomably glorious that he would tell us that we should exult in hope of the glory of God. It is almost like he is smiling and he is saying, “I can’t tell you, but trust me. Trust me.”

By the way, back to 2 Corinthians 12 and verse five he says something interesting about his encounter with God.

He says, “On behalf of such a man will I boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to my weaknesses.”¹⁸

Guess what the Greek word for boast is there? *καυκαομαι* (kow-khah'-om-ahee), the same term that is used here in Romans five to say we boast in hope of the glory of God, we exult in hope of the glory of God, we rejoice.

So he is saying, “I will jump for joy in sheer jubilation when I reflect upon my confident hope of our future bliss, that which I saw, that which I heard.”

So we also exult in the hope of the glory of God because one day we will experience this unrestricted personal fellowship even with the Son of God, our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ.

You will recall in John 14:2 Jesus promised, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”¹⁹

Now why would he do that? That we might enter into that eternal state of beholding his glory. But more than that, actually sharing in it, actually experiencing that. We will enjoy sweet fellowship with the one whose righteousness we wear. And we will become like him as we will see.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ 2 Corinthians 12:5.

¹⁹ John 14:2-3.

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In John 17 verse 24 remember what Jesus prayed?

“Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me,”²⁰ that would be the elect Church, that is us, “be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me.”²¹

Now you will recall. Paul had a sample of this on the road to Damascus, remember? When suddenly the shekinah glory of God just absolutely overpowered him and blinded him, this dazzling brilliant light of his presence and likewise Peter, James and John, do you remember on the mount of transfiguration, they were terrified when they saw a glimpse of the glory of Christ when Jesus somehow peeled back his flesh and the shekinah burst forth from him.

We read in Matthew 17 verse two, “He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.”²²

And Peter later on tells us in 2 Peter 1:16 that they were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

So this prayer that Jesus prayed that someday we would be able to behold his glory was just partially and a little glimpse manifested when he was here on earth. But some day it will explode into full light. For us today as Paul says we can only see it dimly. Our sight is hazy. We see it a bit through Scripture, but Paul is saying that some day you are going to see something so astounding, so absolutely breathtaking that he would later write in Romans eight and verse 18:

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”²³

What is this glory? Well, it is going to include the breathtaking splendors of heaven. It is going to include this unrestricted personal fellowship with the triune godhead, to see and experience the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. We will be able to know God in ways that are exceedingly beyond our awareness of him now.

But Paul adds something else in the next verse in Romans eight and verse 19. He says, “For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly...”²⁴

It is interesting. He is saying that God’s non rational creation is personified here as patiently waiting, anticipating some great event. What is that? He says it is the revealing of the sons of God. But what is this? Well, the revealing is the *apokaluyiv* (ap-ok-al’-oop-sis). It is the unveiling, the uncovering, the revelation of believers in Christ, justified saints who will finally experience the reality of their salvation, of their justification. It

²⁰ John 17:24.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Matthew 17:2.

²³ Romans 8:18.

²⁴ Romans 8:19.

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will all be put on display when we will be eternally separated from sin. We will be free forever from the bondage of our unredeemed humanness. And suddenly the unveiled splendor of our holiness and our glory in Christ will be revealed.

Paul even tells us in Colossians three and verse four, “When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”²⁵

But as we go back to what Paul says in Romans eight and verse 22 he says, “For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.”²⁶

In other words, because of God’s curse upon sin, all creation groans, all creation suffers, is desperately trying to give birth to something new which will be the glorious renovated earth of the millennial kingdom and finally that will merge into the recreated earth that the Lord will create at the end of his millennial reign.

But in verse 23 he goes on to say, “And not only this...”²⁷

In other words, not only is creation groaning and suffering the pains of childbirth together until now

He says, “And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit [referring to believers], even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.”²⁸

See, here he is describing this longing that every believer has. We long to be freed from sin’s corruption. We long to experience the final completing of our adoption as sons of God, that day when our bodies will literally reflect the perfection of Christ.

Beloved, this is why Paul would have us be consumed with the benefits of our justification and therefore exult in hope of the glory of God, because this will not only include an unrestricted personal fellowship with the triune God, but, secondly, a personal transformation into the glory of Christ.

In Hebrews chapter one and verse three the writer speaks of Jesus as being, quote, “the radiance of [God’s] glory and the exact representation of His nature.”²⁹

And then in Romans chapter eight verse 29 Paul says, “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.”³⁰

²⁵ Colossians 3:4.

²⁶ Romans 8:22.

²⁷ Romans 8:23.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Hebrews 1:3.

³⁰ Romans 8:29.

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So we put these Scriptures together and we see that God has predestined believers to have the image of Christ. And when we do, we will share in the likeness of God in terms of the glory of his character we will in some measure have his power. We will have a different makeup in terms of how we are constructed. Our external appearance will be like him. No wonder we are to have a jubilant hope of glory.

You see, if you want to think of it this way, the Father is not going to present to his Son an ugly bride. Who wants to have an ugly bride? Instead, as we read in Ephesians chapter five verse 27 he wants to “present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.”³¹

Again, holy means not just separated from sin, but totally other, totally transcendent from anything that we can imagine. And to think that God is not making this plan up as he goes. God is not hoping and praying that people will join up to be a part of the bride here. His will is not subservient to the will of man. But it is God who has predestined these things. In fact, the marvels of our redemption, according to 1 Corinthians 2:7 is something that God predestined before the ages to our glory. Obviously also this is a plan that cannot be thwarted. This is God’s plan. This is not ours.

And later in Romans chapter nine verse 23 he describes the purpose that God has for predestined believers.

He says, “And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory.”³²

My, how I rejoice knowing that God is in charge of my salvation. Don’t you rejoice in that, that I might know somehow the riches of his glory. Unbelievable.

And Paul speaks of this again in 2 Corinthians three and verse 18.

He says, “But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”³³

The context here refers to the veil that Moses had to wear over his face to protect the Israelites from being absolutely blinded and terrified from the blazing glory of God that emanated from his face after having been in the presence of God.

And the veil is used metaphorically to symbolize the shadowy, the diminishing nature of the glorious mosaic covenant filled with all of its mysterious symbols and types and pictures. But he is speaking of how that veil was removed when Christ came. And through his death he inaugurated the new covenant.

³¹ Ephesians 5:27.

³² Romans 9:23.

³³ 2 Corinthians 3:18.

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The point is when a man places his faith in Christ, he suddenly has a clearer vision of what God has said. He sees the glory of God in the face of Christ in 2 Corinthians chapter four and verse six. He beholds the Son of God and when he does, all of the veiled truths of the Old Testament can be seen clearly.

But it is interesting. Paul goes on in 2 Corinthians three and he adds this fascinating statement. He says, “But we all,” he says, “being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”³⁴

Now think about this, folks. Do you realize that even as I speak right this very moment you are being transformed? The phrase “being transformed” translates what we call a present passive participle. It is from the verb *metamorphō* (met-am-or-fo'-o). We get our word “metamorphosis” from that.

And it speaks of a progressive continual process of sanctification that is empowered by the indwelling Spirit of God who alone can gradually conform us into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice, it happens in stages. It says we continue to do this as we behold him.

Let me read the verse again.

“But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”³⁵

It is similar to what Paul says in Romans chapter 12 and verse two that we are being transformed. There, again, the same verb. There is a metamorphosis that occurs by the renewing of our mind. As we see God, as we see the glory of Christ through Scripture, we gradually begin to manifest who we truly are on the inside. We begin to see that on the outside as we reflect the glory of Christ.

So Paul says here in 2 Corinthians 3:18 that we are ascending from glory to glory until one day we are like him, absolutely astounding.

Dear Christian, you are being transformed right now. Paul will tell us in Philippians chapter three and verse 20:

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state [and, my is it humble, right] into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.³⁶

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Philippians 3:20-21.

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And no doubt this subjection will include the creation of new laws of physics. Don't you long for that resurrected body? Oh, boy, to be like Christ. And it is interesting. As we study Scripture, it is more than kind of a new and improved version of the whole. I mean it is a totally new deal, something completely recreated.

We can go to 1 Corinthians 15 and there Paul tells us about how that we are going to be raised imperishable and we are going to be raised in power. We are going to have a spiritual body beyond anything we can comprehend.

And in 2 Corinthians chapter four verses 17 through 18 Paul in that passage anticipates this coming glory and this really helps put it all in to perspective.

He says, "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison."³⁷

In other words he is saying future glory outweighs anything that we can experience in terms of suffering in this life.

And eh goes on to say, " while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."³⁸

In other words, true endurance in the faith, overcoming the many obstacles that we have in this fallen world requires looking beyond the temporal, beyond the physical and gazing into the eternal to see through the eyes of faith in the Word of God that which we don't see real clear, but we have a hope that one day we will see it and experience it.

In 1 John three and verse two John tells us, "Beloved, now we are children of God."³⁹

But he goes on to say something interesting. You know the passage.

"...and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be."⁴⁰

And I am thankful, by the way, that that is the case, because I am glad it is not going to be what it is right now.

"...and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be."⁴¹

And he says this.

³⁷ 2 Corinthians 4:17.

³⁸ 2 Corinthians 4:18.

³⁹ 1 John 3:2.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

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“We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is [today].”⁴²

Now think about it. Obviously we can't see him just as he is today, right? We can't see that. The triune God describes something very interesting in the Scripture. He often describes himself in terms of the glory of his presence as being this resplendent, awesome, ineffable, brilliant light, this unapproachable light of his shekinah.

In fact, in Daniel chapter two and verse 22 we read that he emanates light without shadow saying that light dwells with him.

The psalmist tells us in Psalm 104 and verse two that he covers himself with light as with a garment.

So, indeed, we don't see him just as he is today.

Paul described Christ Jesus to Timothy in 1 Timothy six verse 16 as “[dwelling] in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and [everlasting power]!”⁴³

And in 1 John 1:5 we read that “God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.”⁴⁴

Now what is fascinating is that physicists tell us that the human eye is incapable of seeing light, that light is completely invisible to us. All we see are light particles, tiny particles interacting in the air. It is matter interacting together that reflect light. So the colors that we see in light depend upon varying wavelengths of light in what they call a light spectrum.

In fact, they tell us that visible light occupies only 1/1000th of a percent of this light spectrum. And it is in that minute portion of that spectrum of light that God allows us to see all of the magnificent things that we see.

So, again, we just see a part of who he is, even in our physical reality here. We don't see him just as he is yet. And that energy spectrum of light I learned that it goes from radio to microwave to infrared and then in the middle is the visible light which is that 1/1000th of a percent that we can see anything. And then it moves long into ultraviolet and then in x-ray and gamma rays. It is staggering, isn't it?

In that one little sliver we see all of the beautiful things that God allows us to see. And so what I am saying here is in this amazing analogy that God uses of himself as being a God of light, we see that we only see just a miniscule range of even who he is. God has revealed himself through creation, through his Word and yet even through studying those things we are absolutely awestruck with what we see in our God.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ 1 Timothy 6:16.

⁴⁴ 1 John 1:5.

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Dear friends, what will it be like when we see him face to face and the full spectrum of light is somehow available to us?

In fact, in 1 Corinthians 13 and verse 10 we read, “When the perfect comes...”⁴⁵

I believe that means when glorification and the eternal state comes, then “... the partial will be done away.”⁴⁶

And then, again, as we read earlier Paul goes on to say, “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.”⁴⁷

You see, in our human condition right now we only see a minute sliver of the spectrum of the glory of God. But, beloved, we hope for something that we have been promised that exceeds our ability to even imagine.

And what is the basis of that hope? It is our justification. Because we have been declared righteous, we can have access to God. We have peace with God. We have a permanent standing in grace. Therefore Paul says, “Exult in hope of the glory of God.”⁴⁸

Now I ask you. Does this describe you? Does this shape your character and conduct?

You know, there is nothing more dishonoring to the cause of Christ than a sour, sullen Christian moping around like Eeyore, you know, that little heavy hearted, despondent donkey in Winnie the Pooh whining, complaining, depressed, discouraged.

Friends, please hear me. I say this with all love. If that describes you, you are either ignorant of these great promises of Scripture or you are just simply refusing to obey the commands to be thankful and rejoice in all things.

But if you can ever get a hold of the reality of your justification and the benefits that are yours because of that, you will not have to be cajoled to somehow exalt in hope of the glory of God. You will not be able to contain yourself.

Oh, that we would rejoice in this blessed hope, to think we are being transformed right now, right this very minute. There is a process of sanctification that is at work and it is going to culminate in these glorious truths. Therefore we can sing with Charles Wesley:

Changed from glory into glory,
‘Til in heaven we take our place,
‘Til we cast our crowns before thee,

⁴⁵ 1 Corinthians 13:10.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ 1 Corinthians 13:12.

⁴⁸ Romans 5:2.

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Lost in wonder, love and praise.

Beloved, this is the promise of God. This is that glorious mystery that Paul talked about in Colossians 1:27.

He says, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”⁴⁹

Dear sinner, I would say to you today, if you do not know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, make today the day of your salvation. Don’t put it off. Believe in him and you will be saved. You will be justified. These glorious promises will be yours.

And, dear Christian, won’t you commit yourself today to exult in the hope of the glory of God? Let this become a consuming reality for you, because of your permanent standing in grace and that you will be able to give full voice to that great hymn written by Henry Francis Light who said this.

Haste then on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith and winged by prayer,
Heaven’s eternal days before thee,
God’s own hand shall guide thee there.

Soon shall close thy earthly mission,
Swift shall pass thy pilgrim days.
Hope soon changed to glad fruition,
Faith to sight and prayer to praise.

Let’s pray together.

Father, thank you for these glorious truths. Cause them to become a consuming motivator in our life that we might enjoy the blessings of our justification that we have right now and remain filled with the jubilant hope of the glory that awaits us to the praise of Christ our Savior, for it is in his name that I pray. Amen.

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⁴⁹ Colossians 1:27.

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