

BC 37; I Thes. 4:13-18; Rom. 8:28-30; Glorification I. A Present Blessing II. A Future Promised III. A Future Purchased

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, does thinking about the future fill you with joy, fear or perhaps uncertainty? With the risk of a spreading epidemic- financial uncertainty and an election next year, it is understandable that many are filled with anxiety. But as Christians, we have a hope for the future and a promise of blessings that surpass and endure well beyond any present disturbances. Today we are going to jump ahead in our BC to the last article in order to bring the Order of Salvation to its end. In other words, continuing to look at Rom. 8:30- we know that those who are called are justified, sanctified and finally glorified. Last week we considered the fact that those who are filled with the Holy Spirit will be conformed to the image of Christ. This transformation is partial in this life- but being made like Christ does reach fulfillment one day. One day we will fully be like Him- looking like and sharing in His glory. Our old, fallen nature will be completely undone- and we will be made perfectly human again. The Bible has a lot to say about the future- and we should embrace and believe this truth while avoiding speculation. Glorification is called the final jewel in the crown of redemption. So today we consider this theme; Jesus Christ glorifies His people on the last day for their good and His glory.

I. A Present Blessing

We start in our first point by seeing that the promise of the future does mean something for us today. Although glorification is a future and a promised reality, there are real, tangible benefits that can be derived from this truth today! In other words, the promise of the future state is not some “pie in the sky by and by” mentality. Rather there are concrete payouts for us while still living in this life. Knowing the Jesus is currently reigning- that our labors in the Lord are not in vain- and that we have an inheritance that is waiting for us- gives us strength today to persevere. We can be patient as we face trials. As Rom. 12:12 says, rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation. Keeping our eyes on the Lord of Glory- knowing that our Savior will come back and make everything right- gives us the steel we need- we are fortified in this truth. We know that our enemies will be crushed- that the church will be vindicated- the gates of hell will not prevail- and the promises of our God will be kept! So the first benefit for today is a patience that is confident. The second benefit is comfort- peace when we face trials. There are

some families of our congregation that have suffered long and hard these past weeks- there is comfort in knowing that in eternity there will be no more pain or sickness! And for those who have lost loved ones, there is comfort in knowing that these loved ones will not be forgotten. That is the expressed purpose of this doctrine as I Thes. 4:18- comfort each other- encourage one another with these words. The fact that Jesus will raise all of His people- giving them all new bodies and welcoming them all into their eternal home- this truth is designed to comfort us when death touches our loved ones- or when we ourselves face death! We need this truth because we are living a fallen world with fallen bodies- walking through the valley of the shadow of death. So we have a comfort and a peace in this life as we cling to the promise of the future with hearts of hope and faith. And the third benefit we have today is that we have a joy-filled eager longing. As our BC art. 37 concludes, we look forward to that great day with longing in order to enjoy fully the promises of God. To say this another way, the promise of the future fills us with joy in the present! As Titus 2:13 says, we are waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Children, how do you prepare to arrive at grandma and grandpa's house on Christmas day? Well, you prepare by getting excited- you are eager- joy-filled- you can't wait! That joy is a good thing- and it should be seen in us as Christians at all times! Better than any Christmas party- we are on our way to our eternal home! That truth should make us- of all people- the most joy-filled! The fact is, we meditate on eternity far less often than we should. As Rom. 15:13 puts it, may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing. God fills us with the joy of delight and desire as we look forward- with eager expectation to the delights that He has promised us! The hope of tomorrow will not disappoint! To live is Christ- but to die is gain! And that gain is what fills us with joy today because we know what tomorrow will bring! As Rom. 8:23 puts it, we groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

II. A Future Promised

But what is this redemption of our bodies? In our second point we are going to consider what is called the eternal state and individual eschatology. We are not going to looking at the judgement aspect nor the

intermediate state, only what happens to us a believer when Jesus returns. Remember that we are focussing on glorification today. In John 7:39, Jesus speaks of a time when He will be glorified after death. So what does it mean for a person to be glorified. Well, when we speak of glorification, we are referring to the change in state and residence which God's people will enjoy when Jesus returns. First of all, there will be a change in state- as the condition of man will undergo a drastic and enduring alteration. We will not cease to be human, but rather we will become a perfect and complete human- fully human and fully good. Let's read from I Cor. 15:42-49. So when Jesus comes back we will be raised in power and honor, made imperishable. Our bodies and our souls will be reunited, and whatever affect the fall had on us will be removed. This is stated in our BC art- which is a quote from Rev. 21:4- He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be morning, or crying or pain, for these former things have passed away. Now imagine how blessed this state will be. No more pain, sickness or death! No need for health insurance and deductibles- no need for doctors as the Good Physician tends to our every need! No more stubbed toes or black eyes or broken bones! No more funerals and morticians- these will be out of work because there will be no more death! How much of our lives revolve around protecting our bodies or seeking health- Only then will we be free from the pain that we endure during this life in the veil of tears! What a glorious day! Added to this, we will be made like Christ! Receiving a glorified body like His! As I John 3:2 says- we know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is! The process of sanctification- beholding Christ so that we look and act more like Him- will be complete because we will be able to see Him perfectly- to gaze at His beauty without any hinderance! Only then will we be able to run and not grow weary- rising up as on the wings of eagles as Isaiah 40 states! That is what we have to look forward to! Secondly, there will be change in residence. Where we are will change as well- the place that these glorified bodies live will be new as well. Our reading from I Thes. 4 outlines this by stating- we will be caught up to meet the Lord and we will be with the Lord forever. Rev. 21 says it this way- God Himself will be with them- He will dwell with us- He will make all things news. Not only does He make our bodies new- He will remake this world again. Having purified this world by fire, a new world order will be sown. A better than Eden garden will be planted- lined with rivers of Living Water and populated with Trees of life. So we will dwell with

God- in His presence- in His new creation. Whatever has gone wrong with this world will be made right. Currently we see decay, frustration and hostility. Then we will be in the context of life, peace and harmony. Rev. 21 describes this new place as the New heaven on the new earth- the heavenly Jerusalem having come down- whose streets are paved with gold and gates are made of pearl. The problem with this world is that good things break down- treasured things get stolen- inheritances get spent. But not here! As LD 22 puts it- Here we will enjoy a perfect blessedness- which no eye has seen and no mind has comprehended. A blessed home and eternal residence in which to enjoy the marriage feast- supping with Christ and His people for all eternity! Here we will have the fullness of life and bliss.

III. A Future Purchased

Before we close, we have yet to consider how it is that we can enter such a glorious place? What right do we have to be caught up with Christ- to receive new bodies- and to enter those gates of pearl? Look back at I Thes. 5:10- Jesus Christ died for us so that we might live with Him! Jesus Christ has gained this inheritance for you! He is the first-fruit of Rom. 8- as He was glorified, we too will be glorified. Entrance into this inheritance is something that Jesus has promised, purchased and secured! That is why it is a promised and guaranteed future. But that is not to say that there will not be rewards given that day. As mentioned briefly last week, Jesus does see what you do- and He will reward labor done in faith and love. Our article says that the faithful will receive the fruit of their labor. These will be rewarded- hearing well done- come and enter into the joy of your master. Col. 3 says you will receive the inheritance as your reward. So although our inheritance is a gift merited by Christ, life has already been purchased for us by His death, it is also true that these who are faithful will be further gifted in the life to come. Again, the promise of reward should encourage us further still to be faithful- knowing that their labor in the Lord is not in vain.

To conclude, the promise of a future, glorified existence is one that should comfort, encourage and even bring a smile to our face and a song to our heart! Jesus Christ glorifies His people on the last day for their good and His glory. This is the good end to which all things are working. So let us all pray- Come Lord Jesus!