Disciples Church

Lesson 78: Wednesday April 19th, 2017

**TEACHING NOTES**

**Q120. At the final judgment, what happens to people who had saving faith in Christ Jesus?**

Their souls will be united forever with their bodies, now finally glorified, and upon their final judgment, these people will go into everlasting life and receive fullness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards in the blessed presence of the Lord.

I have broken our answer down into three parts with a focus on the last part. So, let’s look at them as we unpack our answer tonight to the first question.

1. **Their souls will be united forever with their bodies, now finally glorified.**

Final glorification is the point of the next Q&A, so we will answer this later on tonight. I hate to leave you in suspense, but let’s move to the second part of our answer.

1. **Upon their final judgment, these people will go into everlasting life.**

I taught on the final judgment a few weeks ago. This is the time when Christ returns and judges the world. At that judgment, Christ separates the sheep from the goats or the believers from the unbelievers and sends each from each group to their final eternal dwelling place. We know that these final places are eternal places for all mankind, however for our answer tonight the eternal place for believers has a specific and very beautiful title. **ETERNAL LIFE**. We who have been saved by God will eternally have **LIFE** with Him literally in the presence of Jesus! This eternal life is so much more amazing than we could ever comprehend. This is the hope set before us that we would strive with all our might towards the goal of having Christ and having Him eternally.

Paul says it this way in Philippians chapter 3.

Philippians 3:11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

We are getting ready to dive into this book of Scripture, so I don’t want to give away too much, but I do want to point this truth out. Paul says because Jesus has made me His own, I press on toward the goal! Well, what is that goal? The better question is WHO is that goal. The “who” is Jesus! Christian, this is the point of life to strive to be with Jesus! That’s why Paul uses these words “straining forward” and “pressing on”. Paul strives with all his might toward the end goal of eternal life with Jesus.

Earlier in the Philippians passage, God, through Paul, said this is a mature way to see life. The answer to our focus and joy in all manner of times is to keep our eyes on the prize of eternal life with Jesus our Lord! Oh, how sweet that day will be, Christian, when you will be united with the treasure of your heart!

There are a few important clarities to draw out of our answer. The people in question here are those saved by God. The only way to eternal salvation is by grace through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord. Our next two verses show this truth well:

**John 14:6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

**Ephesians 2:8** for by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **9**not a result of works, so that no one may boast. **10**For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

So, if you are a part of this people that goes into eternal life, it is because God saved you. Those who are not saved will exist eternally as well, only the scripture calls it an eternal death- living forever in a state of ongoing punishment and misery in Hell.

Let’s move on;

**Revelation 21:27** But nothing unclean will ever enter it [the new creation], nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

There are some beautiful truths about our eternal life with God! In fact, that’s what our next point will speak to, but I wanted to show you how this verse connects these two points. Only the saved ones, those written in the Lamb’s book of life, will enter eternal life where there is no sin and no corruption. You see, salvation is a must for this eternal life and Jesus is a must for salvation. The very name of the book is the Lamb’s book of life! Jesus is the only way to this eternal life. He was the sacrificial spotless lamb and He most definitely will save His people from their sin unto eternal life! So, let’s look at what that life will be like. The third part of our answer tonight reads:

1. **They will receive fullness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards in the blessed presence of the Lord.**

**Matthew 25:34 “**Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”

We learned some unique truths when we studied through covenant theology during that portion of our catechism. One of the things we learned was that God has covenanted to save a people unto a kingdom with an everlasting King. Notice the language used here, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, **inherit the kingdom** prepared for you from the foundation of the world”. Since this was done before the foundation of the world, this is speaking about the “Covenant of Redemption”. This Covenant was made before creation. God made and has/will keep His eternal plan to rescue sinners into an eternal kingdom with Christ Jesus as the King!

This is what we are brought into at the end, after the final judgment- the fullness of the Kingdom of God. We are brought finally into a kingdom with no sin, and therefore no corruption. Nothing fades or grows old, nothing dies, nothing fails, and nothing breaks down. This eternal life means there is no longer death, no longer failure or end. How many of you have ever smelled a dying carcass? The stench of a dead animal that’s been in the sun is an unforgettable smell. Growing up in the mountains there were many times when you’d come across something that has been dead and was decaying. In the eternal life, there will never be the foul stench of death again!

We will finally see an upgraded state of what God allowed Adam to taste prior to the fall when we enter eternal life. This will be incredible, but again far more incredible will be the fact that we will enter into the presence of our Lord. Jesus is the ultimate prize of this eternal life.

There will be many other blessings in this eternal life, however I would submit that the “fullness of joy” that we will receive is the joy of being with the treasure of our hearts, namely, Jesus Himself! This next passage in Matthew solidifies this and points to the other blessings we will receive:

**Matthew 25:21** “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’”

We who are saved and see this day will enter into the joy of our master! What is the joy of our master? This is being in His presence, being with God communing with Him eternally. This is the joy I speak of when I say we will be in the presence of our Lord, our master as this verse puts it. But notice something else in the passage, the master said, “you have been faithful over little I will set you over much”. We will be stewards in this eternal kingdom and we will have responsibilities. These will be a blessing not a burden or work that we will dread. No one who gets put over much in eternal life will be upset because this responsibility is and will be a joy for us to have.

Now, there is one more word that we use in this last part of our answer and that word is glory. We will receive fullness of joy and GLORY in the everlasting presence of our Lord. So, what is this glory about? Romans 8 is going to give us a lot of insight to this point and to the focus of eternal life.

**Romans 8:28 “**And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29For 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. 30And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.”

There are some amazing truths shared here in this passage. Many times, this passage gets misused, but let me draw some corrected focus to what’s being said here. Many of us have heard this passage said with just the first part, **”28**And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good”, the problem is most people leave off the rest of this passage. Let me explain:

Many well-intentioned Christians have shared this half-truth with others during times of trial and struggle, during seasons of suffering and hurt. Now this part of verse 28 is absolutely true! For those who love God, who are called according to His purpose, God works all things together for their good. Notice two main areas that people tend to leave out here.

The first is the clear truth that God is the one who calls a person and causes them to love Him. It really is a bummer that more people don’t see how plain this truth is, and the fact that it is revealed all throughout scripture. The very reason we can trust in the truth that God works all things together for our good is because the sovereign God is the one who saved us and the point of His saving us, the second point I want to make here, is that because of this truth that God saves, we can have confidence that God will carry us to the end! Why does this matter you may ask? What’s the second part of my argument? Look at the passage and pay careful attention to the first word in verse 29, **for** those whom He foreknew…

Why does this verse start with the word “for”? The “for” is explaining the previous verse. God works all things together for good, for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose, **for**…

You see, the very evidence of the truth of this well-used passage in verse 28 is what is about to follow it in verses 29-30. Let me say this another way, verse 29-30 tell you the doctrinal foundation for God working all things together for good for those whom He calls according to His purposes. Let’s read them again; “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. 30And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.”

What is the “good” that God works out? Why or how does He work it out? The answer is right here in this passage. The ultimate good is the eternal life and final glorification of the saints whom God has called unto salvation. If God has saved you, then every minute detail in your life, from the worst suffering ever experienced to the best joy you thought you’d ever know, was used according to the perfect plan of our sovereign Lord to bring about your final and ultimate salvation! Listen, if our focus is anywhere other than on this eternal truth and end, then this verse cannot make sense!

When a man is being burned alive at the stake, hearing, smelling, and feeling his very own flesh being burned from his live conscious body, how does he apply this verse in romans 8? How is his flesh burning from his bones being worked out for his good?

The only way he can apply this verse to that situation is if he knows that the death it will cause and the pain involved is not worth comparing to the surpassing glory of knowing and being with Christ Jesus his Lord.

Church, don’t you see that this verse is pointing ultimately to a future hope? This is not ultimately about God working something out for you now.

Many Christians will feel let down if they take this verse the way most people attempt to share and use it! What if that suffering never changes in this life, did God fail? NO! If God saved you, then all things are pointing to this eternal life and glorification.

This is why Scripture can assure us that if God has called you according to His purpose, and by this effectual calling of God you now love Him, then all things that you experience in this life even death at the end of it is worked together for your good. Why, because you will be with God the very being whom you love and want to be with the most! It is better to be with the Lord than to live another day here!

This truth is our hope, it is what we hope in when we endure suffering. Since we know that God will one day bring about full relief, not necessarily in this life, but most definitely in the one to come, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God! This is a key truth that separates us from the rest of the world. When a man sings praises as he’s burned alive instead of screaming out curses to those around him it can only be because he hopes in something yet to come- a future joy and glory that he gets to share in with God.

So, what does this passage mean when it says that God glorifies us? That was the main point I wanted to bring up in this passage. Remember our answer states, “They will receive fullness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards in the blessed presence of the Lord.”, so what is this glory? It is the very glory that is spoken about in the verse here in Romans 8. This chain that God declares through Paul begins with foreknowledge. This is not a foreknowledge in the sense that God looked down through time and saw those free-willed men who would choose him therefore foreknowing this information. Now the word foreknow here is the same concept as the one used in Genesis when Adam knew his wife and they bore a son. It is an intimate knowledge of a person that is loved by God.

This foreknowing is the eternal love God has had for His elect people before He had created them. Those whom He foreknew He also predestined. This predestining took place at the covenant of redemption which also happened before creation. In eternity past God the father promised God the Son a people and a kingdom that He would inherit through His sacrifice and perfect obedience. This covenant that God the Father made with God the Son and the Holy Spirit is applied to every saved soul through God the Holy Spirit.

Those who were chosen in this covenant will most definitely be saved. As sure as the fact that God cannot lie, when God the Father promised God the Son a people, those people who were promised to the Son were as good as saved.

That’s what it means to be predestined. We who were chosen most definitely will be God’s people. In the verse, it says we were predestined to “be conformed to the image of the Son”. So, there was a definite purpose in God’s doing this predestining and it will most certainly come about in those whom He predestined.

Those whom he predestined He also called. This is the effectual calling of God unto salvation. When God calls this way, your will cannot resist His call. This is the call God made to Lazarus to come out of the grave and the 4-day-old dead rotting corpse of Lazarus got up and came out. If a dead corpse cannot resist this call neither can you! The passage goes on, those whom He called He also justified.

What does this word justification mean? When does someone have to justify something? Well, this most often happens when someone has done something wrong. The person who wrongs another usually tries to justify their actions so that they don’t look bad. We are all guilty of this. At least, once in your life when you made a mistake and did something wrong your immediate reaction was to justify what had happened. Look, my daughters do this all the time only they aren’t as good at hiding their sin as we are.

My youngest will come in pleading her case before my oldest who is crying can even come in and tell me what happened and why she’s crying. The thought here is if I can justify myself before dad decides what happened was wrong I’ll be ok. Well, you and I cannot justify our sin. We are condemned because of it and the only justice that must take place is the punishment for it. But, God justifies those whom he foreknew, predestined, and called. He justifies us by placing our sin upon Christ and killing Him for it. The death of Christ must be limited to those who believe because it is absolutely effective for all who it applies to! Jesus’s death accomplished justification for those who it applied to.

This isn’t a possible justification that’s left up to us. Can you imagine God ordaining the death of His Son for someone who would never repent and believe? That would be unjust and that is not how God works. So, you need to see here, church, that we are justified by the blood of Christ and that his atonement was effectual and sufficient.

Now we get to the last clause in this passage, those whom he justified He also glorified. This glorification is what happens to us at the final judgment. When our souls are reunited with our resurrected and glorified bodies and we no longer experience death and corruption, this is when we will be put into our glorified state.

Now I said earlier that our first point will be answered tonight in our second question and here we are. I’ll read the question and ask you to say the answer out loud.

**Q121. What is our *final glorification*?**

The future work of God upon Christians when He transforms our mortal physical bodies to eternal, *glorified* physical bodies in which we will dwell forever in the new heaven and the new earth.

John Murray writes of glorification: “It is the complete and final redemption of the whole person when in the integrity of body and spirit the people of God will be conformed to the image of the risen, exalted, and glorified Redeemer, when the very body of their humiliation will be conformed to the body of Christ’s glory (cf. Phil. 3:21)”. John Murray states, “This truth that glorification must wait for the resurrection of the body advises us that glorification is something upon which all the people of God will enter together at the same identical point in time. There is no priority for one above the other. In this respect it radically differs from death and the glory with Christ upon which saints enter on that event. Each saint of God who dies has his own appointed season and therefore his own time to depart and be with Christ. We can see that this event is highly individualized. But it is not so with glorification. One will not have any advantage over another – all (the saved) together will be glorified with Christ”.

How amazing on that day to be glorified together with all the elect throughout the history of time and enter into the glory of our Lord and savior! I can only imagine the sound of the chorus of praise being sung by all of us as we enter into eternal life together!

Our answer to this question begins by saying that the *final glorification* is a future work. This has been well established in previous lectures. God will do this work at the final judgment and that hasn’t happened yet so it is most definitely a future work.

Our answer goes on to say that it is a *work of God upon Christians*, we have also made this clear in our answer to the first question tonight. Though the physical resurrection is for both the reprobate and the Christian, only the Christian receives final glorification.

Then our answer says that this final glorification happens when God transforms our mortal physical bodies into eternal glorified bodies. Praise God for this work! If we have already passed prior to the final judgment then when this judgment happens our souls will be reunited with our resurrected glorified physical bodies. There is a lot of mystery here so let’s acknowledge that before we dive in deeper.

**1 John 3:2** Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

Our bodies will be like Jesus’ resurrected body. We shall be like Him having a resurrected body that will never perish. The point here is that God will resurrect our bodies and give them to us in a state of glory unlike the bodies we have now. I think I just heard a deep sigh of amen from those who know all too well how fragile and corrupted our current bodies are! Here is another passage to show this point:

**Philippians 3:20-21** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

We will have a glorious body like Jesus’. It will be transformed and it will be glorious. How many of you woke up with back pains this morning? How many of you won’t sleep right tonight because of your body? The truth of the fragileness of our mortal bodies is very real. This simply serves to increase our hope of future joy in resurrected glorified bodies that don’t die, get sick, and carry disease. If you live long enough, you will certainly see the joy of this!

**I found this great illustration and wanted to share it: The story is told of a few generations ago when an old farmer brought his family to the big city for the very first time. They had never seen buildings so tall or sights so impressive. After the farmer dropped his wife off at a department store, he took his son with him to the bank. The bank in this city happened to be the tallest of all the buildings. As they walked into the lobby, they saw something else they had never seen before. Two steel doors opened. A rather large and elderly woman walked in, and the steel doors closed behind her. There was a dial over the doors that swept to the right and then back to the left. The doors opened a second time and a beautiful young lady walked out. The farmer was amazed. He turned to his son and said, “You wait right here. I’m going to get your mother and run her through that thing.”**

The story clearly breaks down when we think of it in light of our resurrected bodies, but the idea is the same. In a moment, we will be transformed and our new bodies will be glorious!We see this truth most thoroughly taught in 1 Corinthians 15. We are going to spend some time here so open your Bibles and get ready to take notes. I want to look at a rather large section and just draw out some points as we go. It will be helpful to remember a few foundational things and get a little background about the passage before we begin.

Paul is teaching that there is a literal physical resurrection and explaining some of the mystery involved. It appears that some who had heard and believed when Paul taught them were having doubts or really struggling with the bodily resurrection.

This makes sense. As you might remember a few weeks ago when I taught, I explained that the common belief of the day was a form of Gnosticism which, in a very simple explanation, is the belief that the physical is bad and the spiritual is good. Now remember that the glorified resurrection belongs to those who are believers or the way Paul will say it in these passages, those who are “in Christ”.

**1 Cor.** 15:12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 15We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. 16For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. 17And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Notice the clarity of Paul’s argument here. If there is no resurrection, then Jesus was not resurrected. If Jesus was not resurrected, and we taught you that God had resurrected Him, then we misrepresented God. (Basically, why have you believed what I taught you if there are parts that are false? As an infallible messenger of God, an Apostle, Paul could not speak falsely in teaching doctrine.) If Christ has not been raised, then your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Notice the ending Paul says, “19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. “ Why does he say this? Well, if this life is all we have and we spent it hoping in Christ, then we wasted this temporary life and should be pitied above all people. You may have heard the argument that even if a Christian is wrong in the end about their God, their life was still better for having lived by God’s word. This passage completely destroys that bad argument. Christian, if there is no resurrection, then you are to be pitied above all men! Let’s keep going.

Verse 20, But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Notice again the language of “in Christ”. All those found “in Adam” (represented by Adam, not Jesus) in the end will experience an eternal death. All of those who are “in Christ” will be made alive again and enter into eternal life because they are represented by Jesus. Let’s continue:

Skipping down to verse 35, But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” 36You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. 38But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

Paul uses the same illustration Jesus used in the gospels. He says when you sow a seed, the seed must die and then new life sprouts out of that seed. The body or shell of the seed that dies looks different than what sprouts out from it when it has died. Notice Paul’s pointing to God here to say, this is God’s design and he will give it a body as He has chosen.

Verse 42, So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 43It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 44It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

Paul says we will have a spiritual body. The resurrected body will be physical and spiritual. It will have a glory unlike the one it had when it was fallen physical. Notice the contrasts used here. Our physical bodies were perishable, sown in dishonor and weakness due to the fall, and merely natural. Our resurrected bodies are raised, imperishable, in glory and power, and are called a spiritual body.

Let us also note here that this glorified eternal body is a made-new body; it is the same body, but upgraded. We will not get a new or different body in the sense of it not being our first body improved. Like Christ, who clearly had his first body-yet improved- upon resurrection and glorification, so will we.

45Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being” the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.

Again, the point is made here for those who are in Adam. Their resurrected bodies will not be glorious and for those who are in Christ, their resurrected bodies will be like Christ’s.

49Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. 50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52in 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. 53For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54When 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?”

The resurrection of Christians into their glorified bodies must happen in order for us to become or inherit our eternal kingdom with Jesus. If you’ve ever longed for this passage to be true, if you’ve ever used it or prayed it in any situation, you must see that the point of this victory of Christ culminates in the Final Judgment and the resurrection of His people to eternal life. Our glorified bodies are a part of this victory over the sting of death. From this point in time (the final judgment) moving forward there will be no more pain or death for the Christian.

For those who are in Christ this is the hope we look forward to. This is the light at the end of the tunnel. The joy we have in the death around us is this; because Jesus died and was resurrected, we know there is a day coming when death and pain will be no more! Christian, this is our hope, our future glorification with Christ when our biggest enemy death is finally defeated and gone.

Now continuing with our answer, we see the reason our bodies must be resurrected into eternal unperishable spiritual bodies is so that we can enter into the eternal kingdom prepared for us- those whom God has saved. We see this kingdom in Revelation 21.

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 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, for the former things have passed away.”

**John Murray writes, “It is a renewed cosmos, new heavens and new earth that we must think of as the context of the believers’ glory, a cosmos delivered from all the consequences of sin, in which there will be no more curse but in which righteousness will have complete possession and undisturbed habitation” (*Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, p. 179).**

In this new heaven and new earth where our glorified bodies will dwell eternally, there is no more sin, no more tears, no suffering, no lack of joy. We will be separated finally from all sin, given made-new bodies, and kept sinless by God. We will forever praise the glory of God’s grace in glorified bodies made to last eternally. This will be infinite joy that we have eternally!

So, let me end with this, through our study of last things we have covered multiple tough topics. There have been some difficult truths to address and there have been some glorious grace-filled truths to hope in. I am glad tonight to be teaching on this truth as it should be the hope that sustains us through anything we experience in this life! It should be the thing we most look forward to, not primarily because this new body will be eternal, but primarily because we know upon receiving it we will be with God eternally. Christian, there is nothing greater to long for!

Let’s pray!