

People of God, today I finish my four-part series from 2 Cor. 5 about the resurrection body. In 2 Cor., Paul is comforting God's people with the truth that when we die God will deliver us from death by raising us from the dead. And this truth should comfort us when we are in the midst of any affliction and suffering. And thus far we have seen three reasons why we have such hope, today we will look at the fourth.

The first reason Paul knows that God will raise us from the dead is because of the progression of the Old Testament story of God's house moving from glory to glory from Tabernacle to Temple, from Tent to Building. The glory of our bodies is like that. Paul says that if this earthly tent of our body is destroyed, we have a building from God.

The second reason Paul gives us for why he is certain that when we die we will be resurrected, is because it happened to Jesus. Christ's resurrection body was a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And because of our union with Christ, we also have a new body, a new temple building, new clothing from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Last week we looked at the third reason why Paul was convinced that when we die God will rescue us from death by raising us from the dead. And that reason is that the Holy Spirit groans within us, longing to put on the Resurrection body. Not that we would be unclothed, as a naked spirit, but that we would be further clothed in glory and immortality, in a new body.

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And the fourth reason Paul gives to comfort us in our affliction and to give us the hope that we will be raised from the dead is that God has given us His Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our heavenly and eternal inheritance.

2 Cor. 5:1-5 says this:

For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, ³if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. ⁴For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. ⁵Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

A related passage to this is found also 2 Cor. 1:22 – where Paul says - *God has put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*

When the Apostle calls the Spirit a “guarantee,” he is using language from the world of commercial transactions. Whenever a large expensive transaction is made, the seller will require that the buyer give a down payment as security to ensure that the rest of the money will be paid in full. And in the ancient world, that down payment carried with it an obligation on behalf of the buyer, accompanied by a promissory note, to pay the rest.

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Now when Paul says the Spirit is the guarantee, or deposit, or pledge, or down payment, the idea is that God intends to keep his word and complete his contractual obligations. Now of course we know that there are people who default on the payments and who do not keep their promise to pay the whole amount. But when God makes a promise, he intends to keep it. For God cannot lie.

God never defaults. He never misses payments. When God gives us His Holy Spirit, the Spirit is God's guarantee, His down payment, His security deposit, promising that He will bring His redemption to completion.

As Paul says in Phil. 1:6 – *And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

And he not only gave his Spirit as the down payment, and guarantee, but also as the seal of his promise. What is the seal? It is the signature of God's ownership, and his mark of authenticity.

As he also says in Eph. 1:13 – *“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”*

Thus Paul says that the Spirit is both the seal of God's ownership, and the downpayment, that he will take full possession of us on the day of Jesus Christ. And that full possession is explicitly

referring to the resurrection of our bodies. Paul uses a similar idea in Romans 8, saying:

²³And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Another idea that is similar to the Spirit being the downpayment or the guarantee of our salvation, is that he is the first fruits of our resurrection. The First fruits is an image from Israel's agricultural life and sacred feasts, the Feast of Weeks, which is also known as the Feast of First Fruits.

At this festival, the Israelites offered the very first sheaf of the harvest to the Lord, believing that as God gave the first fruits, he will most certainly give the full harvest. Now this of course required a great deal of faith on the part of the Israelites, as they would be giving the offering of their first fruits at a time when not much was ready to be harvested.

And it just as much requires a good amount of faith on our part today to understand that we have the first fruits of the Spirit, and even though the harvest of our individual and corporate salvation is not yet complete, God will finish what he began. But the means through which God will give us the fullness of our salvation is of course the same as when we received the first fruits of the Spirit. Which is to say, through faith. As Paul says to the Galatians:

“Did you receive the Spirit by works of the flesh or by hearing with faith?”

The answer of course is by hearing with faith. If we received the Spirit in part by faith, then the only way in which we will receive the fullness of the Spirit when our bodies are resurrected, is also by faith. Thus 1 Pet. 1:5 says *“By God’s power we are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

Faith in God’s promises is what saved us, is saving us, and will save us. Faith from first to last, beginning to end, is what saves us and is the means through which the Spirit will transform our bodies to be like Christ’s glorious body. That is why Paul says, that it is in this hope, the hope of the resurrection of the body, that we are saved.

Now if faith is so important to our salvation, I think it is worth asking, along with the Heidelberg Catechism:

21. Q. What is true faith?

A. True faith is a sure knowledge whereby I accept as true all that God has revealed to us in His Word. At the same time it is a firm confidence that not only to others, but also to me, God has granted forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation, out of mere grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits. This faith the Holy Spirit works in my heart by the gospel.

Therefore if we are going to be saved in the hope of the resurrection of the body, I think it is worth considering what a few of the benefits are that we will receive upon putting on our

resurrection bodies. For in contemplating these benefits, we will encourage our hearts to hope for that salvation even more, and increase our faith.

Allow me to give you four benefits now and a fifth at the communion table.

1. Upon the reception of our resurrection body, we shall finally be **freed from sin and live in a state where we will be unable to sin.** Imagine what a wonderful time that will be when you will never again have an evil thought or the fleshly desire to carry out those sinful desires. You will never again taint and pollute your worship to God because of your sin. You will never have your mind distracted from seeking the most pleasure in the glory of God. The vessel of your body will be 100% totally holy unto the Lord. A True Temple of God where no sin and wickedness and evil dwell, but only the Spirit of Holiness.

Upon putting on immortality you will finally be free of all guilt associated with your sins. You will enter into the state of perfect forgiveness of sins, and all your work, laughs, loves, desires, and songs will be pure and holy unto the Lord. You will never again have to pray for God to not lead you into temptation, for there will be no sin to tempt you, nor will you have the ability to be tempted even if there were sin. What a day that will be! That is what the Holy Spirit groans for, that day when your body will have no sin., but will be restored in perfect godliness.

2. Rev. 21:3 says: 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. ⁴He 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.”*

When you receive your resurrection body, **all sickness and bodily pains will be made completely well. Your whole body shall be made entirely new, never to die again, nor be subject to sickness and illness.** All sadness you once experienced, all the grief and the pain and the sorrow, all aches and pains, hurt and trauma, all of that will be gone forever.

There will never be crime again. All injustice will be abolished. There will never be a mother who loses a child again. There will never be child who loses her father. There will never again be drive by shootings, corrupt justice systems, murder, rape, abortion, emotional and mental and verbal abuse will be a thing of the past. Drug overdoses and suicides will never happen again. There will never be a hurricane or tornado or flooding or fire, or some natural disaster. There will never be a car accident again, there will never be a train derailment, or plane crash. No more terrorist attacks, no more wars, no more tragedy.

Even the animal kingdom will never again be dangerous toward each other, or toward humans. As Isaiah depicts, the wolf and the

lamb will lie down together, the lion and the ox will eat grass together, and a young child will play by the cobra's den. Nothing will ever be able to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain. Death will be abolished forever. The former things will have finally passed away, and all things will be made new, and there will truly be life everlasting.

3. Job. 19:25-27, *"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last I will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has thus been destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another."* Upon your death, when you put on immortality, **you will finally have your heavenly sight.** Jesus says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, **for they shall see God.**" Words cannot adequately describe the glories of the beatific vision, when all types and vain shadows flee, when all hidden glories and darkened mirrors of life are finally made real and brought to light. When you put on your new body you shall look with new eyes free from sin and mortality, and you shall gaze in wonder upon your God, free to see him as he is, and you will discover the true meaning of the song, Behold the Glories of the Lamb.

On that day you will see Jesus Christ face to face. The Sun of Righteousness, clothed with our glorified human nature, in awesome power and splendor, having everlasting dominion over all things reigning on His throne, upholding all things by the sheer power of His word, you will see this one, in all His glory and beauty

and holiness, and you will not die, but you shall live and because in seeing him, you will be transformed to be like him.

If you can imagine what it might be like to have eyes that could look at the sun's glory in full strength and not go blind, imagine how much more glorious is the Everlasting Holy Trinity of God in His perfect glorious unity, whose radiance and glory and beautiful holiness is before your very eyes.

You will be able to look upon your God, and all holy pleasures and joys and the deepest and most intense sense of awe and unfathomable splendor shall enrapture you forever, where colors are new, sounds unheard, smells ineffable, and perhaps even new senses here unknown will be your forever, and you will never grow weary of such glory, for God shall be to you a continual source of infinite and eternal joy and strength, that you may behold him in all his radiance and not grow weak or weary.

4. The same is true of God's love. When you put on your resurrection body, beloved, you will then enjoy the love of God like you have never experienced this side of eternity. There will no more be a veil covering God's face, nor will you ever again think that God frowns upon you. He will only look upon you with love and acceptance. And not even a condescending love that we experience now, but a love full of the glory and dignity and perfect love that each member of the Holy Trinity has for one another.

You will have been brought into the very heart of the Trinity of Love, and be made a partaker of the divine nature, as St. Peter says. Thomas Watson says, “If in this life we can only discover and smell but a few drops of the sweet fragrance of God's love, being able to only hold but a few drops, for our body now is as but a small vile, after we die, yeah when we live, we will enjoy much more of God's love as our vessels will be bigger and deeper, able to hold more, much more, and we will know God's love better than any loving embrace we have here in this life.”

Nevermore will a person fall down for fear of being destroyed by the holiness of God, we will fall down simply out of love and worship.

He shall uphold you with the word of His power, and embrace you in the bosom of his love forever. You will be able to fully and completely, without weakness of flesh or spirit to worship Christ and search out his infinite glory for all eternity, and never get bored or tired and, and you will never exhaust the infinite riches of almighty God.

When we've been here ten thousand years
Bright, shining as the sun
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun

People of God, the hope of our resurrection body is the Christians anchor, which he casts within the veil. A Christian's hope is not in this life but he "has hope in his death."

But this is only for those who persevere in believing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and have hope in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. For those who do not believe, all these promises are lost in a moment, and the wicked lose all hope when they die. Though they lived wickedly in this life, there was still a small hope for the mercy and love of God to prevail upon them, and they still yet hoped they would go to heaven when they died.

However, once they die, they are stripped of all such vain hope, for their hope was not in the anchor that reaches behind the veil, but as it were in a spiders web, which the fire of God's wrath burns up in an instance. At death, the unbeliever and hypocrite will lose all sense of hope, and be plunged into the pit of despair, realizing that during this life they did nothing but flatter themselves in to everlasting burnings of hell. *"Such are the paths of all who forget God; the hope of the godless shall perish. His confidence is severed, and his trust is a spiders web."* - Job 8:13-14.

People of God, do not reject your hope in the resurrection of the body, and neither place your hope in this world only, for you will of all men be most pitied. Do not store up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust will consume them. But place your heart in Heaven where Christ and immortality and the hope

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of the resurrection is, and you will find rest for your soul when you die.

And continue to stir up within yourselves that longing of the Spirit, stoke the flames of God's love within you, and understand the Spirit's desire to put on immortality. For all this is what creates hope in you, and it is this hope that will save you. Amen.

5. At **death, you will gain a royal and magnificent feast.** The Lord Jesus told us that he goes to prepare a place for us. But the most royal and magnificent of castles would be but a place of emptiness and sorrow, a place of starving if there be no feasting and cheer. The royal banquet which the saints have at death is pictured for us in the marriage supper of the Lamb.

This royal supper of the Lamb will not only satisfy hunger and thirst, but it will prevent hunger and thirst, for the Word of God says in Revelation 7:16, that those who enter into glory will no longer hunger or thirst. And what shall be the main course of the marriage Supper of the Lamb? But the Tree of Life of course. And since this tree bears its 12 fruits every month, there will be no need to have a surplus stored up for the winter, for there will be always a continual and fresh course served up to the Saints of God.

God's mercies are new every day, and in His kindness He now pledges to you anew the promises of the blessing of immortality. St. Paul says in Romans 2, that God will render to you according to your works: to those who by patience in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.

So as you come to the table today, seek for glory and honor and immortality - seek Christ here in these ordinary elements of bread and wine, and receive them with faith, believing that these are tokens and signs of God's good pleasure toward you who believe, a foretaste of the kingdom to come, a promise of our inheritance in the kingdom of God, and place holder for your seat at the marriage supper of the Lamb. This gives us great cause to lift up your hearts...