

We have been looking at the unbreakable golden chain in Romans 8:29-30. This morning we have arrived at the 5th of the five links in this chain, glorification. Those whom God foreknew he also predestined, and those He predestined He called, and those He called He justified and those He justified He also glorified.

We started our exploration in eternity past. God foreknew His own people before the foundation of the world. And He predestined those people called His elect, to be conformed to the image of His Son Jesus Christ. Before the foundation of the world God predestined His people to be adopted as sons and daughters so that Jesus would be the firstborn of many siblings. Then we moved from eternity past into the mortal life of each elect person and learned that at some point in their lives God effectually and irresistibly called His own to Jesus. We know that calling was effective and irresistible because every single person who was called answered by coming in saving faith to Jesus Christ and they were all justified. So we were foreknown and predestined before the world began, and we were called and justified at some point in our mortal lives and now we move into the future and learn that everyone God justifies He also glorifies.

I truly love the fact that God used the past tense of this verb, glorified. Being in the church, I know that I will receive that body at the rapture. And since this body is obviously not glorified, I have either missed the rapture or it is still in the future. But God says, those whom He justified he also glorified. In God's mind it is as good as done. Now people use that expression, as good as done, and it does not mean much. But when God treats something as if it is done, it is done!

Martin Luther wrote a book titled "The Bondage of the Will" that explores this idea. Luther's logical conclusion is that once something is known by God, it is certain. Since God's knowledge is complete and perfect, He cannot know a thing that then fails to be. And it gives me tremendous comfort to know that the job God started in me will be completed. It is so certain that God speaks of it in the past tense. Those whom He justified, He also glorified.

Brothers and sisters I hope you understand the significance of this. Do you see that we should live for Christ boldly, without fear, knowing with certainty that the world can never take away what God has promised? If God is for us, who can be against us?

If you are in the faith, then you have been justified and you will be glorified. And you don't have to guess about it. Paul writes in 2Cor 13:5 Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? --unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

Examine yourselves. If Jesus Christ is in you, then Hallelujah, you have eternal life. If He is not or if you are not sure, then for heaven's sake, literally for heaven's sake, repent and turn from your sin and turn to Jesus who died in your place on that cross, and was buried, and rose again from the dead and ask Him to forgive you and to be the Lord of your life. Then take the test again.

Those whom God justified, He also glorified.

What does it mean then to be glorified?

One part of it is that we will get to exchange this mortal body for an immortal body.

Open your Bibles please to First Corinthians chapter 15. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 15. In this chapter Paul is talking about the resurrection of Jesus Christ and how important it is. Paul establishes that just as Christ has been raised from the dead so too all who are His people will be raised from the dead.

“But each in his own order:” verse 23 says, “Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.”

And then beginning at verse 35, Paul writes,

1Co 15:35 But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"

1Co 15:36 You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

1Co 15:37 And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.

1Co 15:38 But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

1Co 15:39 For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.

1Co 15:40 There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another.

1Co 15:41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

1Co 15:42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.

1Co 15:43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.

1Co 15:44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

1Co 15:45 Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

1Co 15:46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.

1Co 15:47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.

1Co 15:48 As 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.

1Co 15:49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

1Co 15:50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Keep your Bibles out but let's stop there for a minute.

As you can see, comparing our earthly bodies to our heavenly bodies is like comparing a seed to the full grown plant. We will still be somehow physical, but no longer flesh and blood. We will have physical bodies that do not age or perish. We have natural bodies now but then we will have spiritual bodies. And just as we were born in mortal bodies like Adam who represents the fallen human race, we are born again into the promise of immortal bodies like Jesus who is the firstfruits from the dead.

We don't know a lot about these new bodies but we do know that they are immortal and imperishable. We also know that we will have a body like the risen Lord has now.

John the Apostle writes in

1Jn 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.

So we will be like Christ. Of course we already knew that since our study of predestination says that we will be conformed to His image.

We also learned that we are predestined to adoption so that we can share in the inheritance with Jesus. And here in 1 Corinthians we read in verse 50 ... flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Meaning that we must get our new bodies before we inherit the kingdom of God. Which means that contrary to what many teach, the kingdom is not fully here yet.

And we learned that (42-44) What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.

I would like for you to consider these things because they lay to rest many false teachings. There is a teaching that says that right now we have all the power, but Paul wrote that this mortal seed is sown in weakness and raised in power. There is a teaching that we already have everything we are going to get if we will simply claim it. That whatever is in the spirit realm we can claim in the natural realm. But Paul says that it is sown a natural body and raised a spiritual body. Our Mormon friends teach that we start out as little spirit babies floating around out there in the spirit cloud waiting for physical bodies. But Paul writes (46) it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.

There are people who want it all now and so they teach that you can have it all now. They are false teachers because there is clearly a lot more to come. You do not have your best life now. Your best life is yet to come and it comes after the resurrection.

Let's pick it back up in 1 Corinthians 15:51.

1Co 15:51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we

shall all be changed,

1Co 15:52 in 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.

1Co 15:53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

1Co 15:54 When 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."

1Co 15:55 "O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?"

1Co 15:56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

1Co 15:57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1Co 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

What could be clearer than that? When 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."

Oh there is a lot more to come. And the life we have now in Christ as wonderful and indeed, as glorious as it is, is only a foretaste of what is to come. The most important thing for us to know right now is in verse 58, "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

Since we know what is to come we can work fearlessly and tirelessly for the Lord now. Since our glorious future is guaranteed, we can work for Jesus with confidence, knowing that our labor is not in vain.

All of that is based on receiving our resurrection bodies. But glorification is much more than that. Perhaps the most wonderful part of glorification is that our sin nature will be removed! Imagine it. We will be the sinless people that God designed us to be. We will be able to stand in the presence of our Holy Lord without shame. We will spend eternity getting to know each other at our very best, and in fact at God's very best. How often have you wished that 'the real you' would shine without the taint of sin? How often have you longed for

someone to really know you the way you know you can be? When Jesus died at the cross He paid the price of redemption and He bore away the sins of all who believed, but when we are glorified we will be rid of our very sin nature. No more will we struggle against temptation. No longer will we battle against lust. Our desires will be pure so all our desires will be ours. Glory, glory, glory.

And then there is perhaps the most glorious part of all. That is that we will forever be in the very presence of our risen Lord. Paul writes in

1Thes 4:16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

1Th 4:17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

We will always be with the Lord. Amen?!

After Jesus was buried we read in John 20 that Mary Magdalene stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

Joh 20:14 Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

and

Joh 20:16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him, "Master."

I have long imagined how wonderful that moment had to be when Jesus sweetly called Mary by name and she understood that she was in the presence of the Lord who had defeated the grave. And all she could do was fall at his feet and cling to Him.

My friends, we who belong to Him will each have that moment, and more than that, our moment with the Son will last forever.

In Revelation 21 John is given a peek into the future. He writes,

Rev 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth...

Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of

heaven from God...

Rev 21:3 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.

Rev 21:4 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."

Rev 21:5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." ...

And John saw that the new Jerusalem was made of crystal and jewels and gold and pearls.

But there was no temple there because

Rev 21:22 ... its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

Rev 21:23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

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

(Rev 22) Then an angel showed John the river of the water of life that we will drink from flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb and the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit that we will eat from.

And John saw us. The glorified children of God. We worship God and the Lamb of God and we will see His face, and His name will be on our foreheads. And night will be no more. We will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be our light, and we will reign forever and ever.

Oh I don't think we can imagine half the glory to come.

Those whom God justified, He also glorified.

Come Lord Jesus.