

Title: The Happiest Day

Text: Ps 17: 15

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Subject: The Happiest Day

For one who believes the Lord Jesus Christ is their only righteousness, the happiest day of their lives is the day they close their eyes in death and open them perfectly conformed to our Redeemer.

Psalm 17: 15: As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

Brethren imagine leaving this body of death and this veil of tears to immediately awake to behold the face of Christ our Righteousness. Imagine beholding his face in righteousness with Christ's likeness. It is certainly better than anything we can imagine.

1 Corinthians 2: 9: as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But God has revealed some things to us in his word and in our new hearts by his Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2: 10: But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

All who depart trusting Christ's Righteousness alone enter into that glorious liberty of the children of God. The spirit of the believer, made meet by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, returns to God immediately. The scripture declares they shall remain in glory until Christ comes again in great glory. He will bring them with him. When Christ returns he shall first raise the bodies of those saints who are with him in resurrection glory. Then believers who are yet alive shall be changed, glorified, and caught up to glory with them. Then all Christ's redeemed shall forever be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

But what happens immediately when one of God's saints closes their eyes in death?

IMMEDIATELY THEY AWAKE WITH CHRIST

When one of God's saints takes their last breath in this life, immediately they awake with Christ. For the sanctified sinners, born of the Spirit of God, resting in Christ by faith "*to be absent from the body, [is] to be present with the Lord*" (1 Cor 5: 8). The Lord Jesus said,

John 11:25: I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

Those born-again of the Spirit are given spiritual life by the Spirit of God. Before we were dead in trespasses and in sins. But the Spirit of God regenerates, creates in us a new spirit, and we live. As the gift of God's grace, he gives us faith to believe on our Lord Jesus Christ. We are made willing in the day of Christ's power working effectually in the new heart. So they that live and believe on Christ shall never die.

Our bodies die because they are of Adam. They must return to the dust due to sin. Sin entered by Adam's one transgression and death by sin. Since Adam was the head of all his race death passed upon all men. Therefore by Adam's disobedience all are made sinners (Rom 5: 19). Therefore our bodies must die and return to the dust.

But by Christ's obedience, God's elect were made the righteousness of God in him. The strength of sin is the law. The law declared us all guilty. But Christ delivered God's elect from condemnation by bearing the sin of his elect on the cross. Christ satisfied the justice of the law for his people. Doing so Christ put an end to death—the second death, condemnation—for his people. All his people arose in him where sin and death have no more dominion over us because sin and death have no more dominion over our Savior (Rom 6: 6-11). Therefore whosoever liveth by the Spirit of God and believeth on Christ shall never die.

As precious as it was the first time you held your newborn baby in your arms so scripture says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is death of his saints" (Ps 116: 15).

That is why Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21) Paul anticipated immediately awaking in the likeness of Christ to behold Christ's face in righteousness.

The Lord Jesus told the dying thief "Verily, I say unto thee, Today thou shalt be with me in paradise" (Lu 23:43). The departed saints are not in that imaginary place the papacy call purgatory. They are not floating around on clouds. Their spirits are not sleeping in the grave. God's departed saints are with him in spirit immediately.

What about our bodies? When Christ returns, Christ shall raise our bodies incorruptible. He shall raise the bodies of those saints already with him. Their bodies are said to sleep in the grave bed like one sleeps in a physical bed. After raising their bodies incorruptible, Christ will change our vile bodies into incorruptible glorified bodies and we all shall arise with Christ to glory. Then shall the victory be final!

1 Corinthians 15: 51: Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [our bodies], but we shall all be changed, 52: In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53: For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55: O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? 56: The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. 57 But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE JOY ENTERED INTO

Psalm 17: 15: As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

The joy of the departed saints is that they are right now in the presence of our Redeemer. Behold Christ and being made like him they are satisfied! What satisfies a believer's heart now is beholding the glory of God in the face of our Redeemer by faith.

2 Corinthians 4: 6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Every believer has a foretaste in our new heart of that glorious satisfaction. When the Lord makes the word effectual so as to give a clear view of Christ by faith he creates in our hearts “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.” It is how he “keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Php 4:7). But this only by beholding the glory of God in Christ’s face by faith. Imagine the satisfaction of our brethren who are beholding our Redeemer face-to-face. They are beholding him, not by faith nor by hope, but face to face!

Job 19:27: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another;

1 John 3:2: Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

1 Corinthians 13: 12: For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

Our departed brethren know him in every way. They know him in his word as perfectly as he can be known so that they behold how truly Christ is in every word of scripture. They know him in all providence beholding how he worked all things together for them according to his eternal purpose. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, right now our departed brethren, know Christ with complete wisdom and knowledge.

This satisfaction is the satisfaction of *beholding his face in righteousness*. It is beholding Christ himself with no unbelief and no sin to mar the view. They behold the face of our dear Savior with no distraction of time and worry. They are experiencing being righteous by Christ. They have perfect communion with our Redeemer. He said that he shall say to us “enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” The joy is our Lord Jesus Christ himself. It is the joy of beholding his face in righteousness and knowing him as he knows us! (Mt 25: 21)

Christ is our Rest. Imagine the happiness of perfect rest in glory with Christ.

Revelation 14: 13: Blessed [happy] are the dead which die in the Lord from hence forth, yea, saith the Spirit that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.

All who die in faith enter into Christ’s perfect rest. In and by the righteousness of Christ we are raised in glory to rest from the toil and labor and strife and cares and fears of this life. They enter into that happy rest from the sorrows of our bodies. Our departed brethren are resting from the sorrow of sins and shortcomings which every child of God hates and longs to be free from. They have rest from the very presence of sin—they have forever put off the old man which a burdensome body of death. They have entered into the rest that Christ himself is to his people.

I am certain we do not realize the pressure of sin because it is all we have ever known. Scripture calls sin a burden to us. There will be a physical and spiritual release from sin when we awake in Christ’s likeness. The only thing I can think of to illustrate this is the release from physical pressure. When I was a child I had terrible fluid on my ears. It was constant pressure that cause terrible pain. But when the doctor would drain that fluid, I would have immediate relief. No more crying. Relief! Try to imagine the relief of being freed from the

pressure of sin when Christ delivers us into that glorious liberty of the sons of God. Our deliverer is God our Father through Jesus Christ our Lord. “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death! I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 7: 24-25).

Our departed brethren are singing and worshipping Christ perfectly with a host of angels.

Revelations 5: 11: And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12: Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

They are serving our Redeemer day and night and he is with them constantly.

Revelations 7: 14:...they have come out of much tribulation [done with this world forever] and have washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. 15: Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. 16: They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17: For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Revelations 21: 1: And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2: And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3: And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. 4: And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5: And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6: And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7: He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

A WORD TO US WHO REMAIN

We have been hearing God’s good news concerning God’s saints who died in faith. They departed this life found in Christ’s righteousness alone freely imputed to them through faith in Christ. It is righteousness solely of Christ, apart from their works. But to those who depart unbelieving without Christ there shall also be an eternity awaiting. Except for the unbelieving it will be a living eternity called the second death.

Revelations 21: 8: But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

That is a description of every sinner outside of Christ. That is a description of every sinner who meets God in his very best works. Christ our Righteousness shall judge all who meet him dressed in their own filthy garments and shall cast them out forever.

The wise man said, "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart" (Ecc 7:2). If a loved one has departed then lay it to heart. You too shall die and after this the judgment (Heb 9:27). It is only through faith in Christ that sinners are found in Christ's righteousness alone! So seek Christ now while he may be found. Believe on him while he is near

Ecclesiastes 12:1: Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

Mark 8: 36: For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37: Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 38: Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Get under the preaching of the gospel with his people. Get in his word. Seek him like your life depends on it because it does! If you can seek Christ then it will be because God our Father already sought you from eternity by divine election. If you can believe on Christ then it will be because the Spirit of God already quickened you and gave you faith in him. But hear this word and do it now! May God make you willing in the day of his power.

For believers who weep over a departed saint, understand, it is ok to mourn. Abraham mourned Sarah. Joseph mourned Jacob. All Israel mourned Aaron and Moses. But think of the joy that the departed saint has entered into and your tears will be tears of joy.

As believers mourn their departed brethren our Lord says, "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." (Ps 55:22). Keep running the race looking to Christ alone. Keep pressing toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God for he shall call each one he redeemed and regenerated home to glory. "For we through the Spirit wait for the very same hope of righteousness by faith" (Gal 5:5). In the time it takes a vapor to vanish, our Redeemer will say us, "Enter into the joy of thy Lord!" That will be the happiest day of our lives. It will be a happy day that knows no end!

Amen!