

“50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, 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. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” (1Co 15:50-58)

In praying for the saints at Ephesus, the Apostle Paul disclosed the passion and burning of his heart. [Eph 3:14-21] I paraphrase: “that they might be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man. That Christ would dwell in their hearts by faith, to be rooted and grounded in love, so that they could be able to comprehend with all the saints the breadth, length, depth, and height; to know the love of God which passes knowledge, that they might be filled with the fullness of God.” God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think. Read that great passage in Eph. 3:14-21 and meditate on it.

This is the second sermon in the ORDO SALUTIS. This is a huge subject, but I have tried to break it down into small segments, but it is important that we understand that all the parts are interconnected. I want to see several things this morning about the work of God in salvation, with the focus on what takes place just before the child of God enters into the eternal inheritance of the New Heaven and the New Earth, the things we spoke of last week.

We are beginning at the end, because Scripture says that we are saved by hope. Without hope there is no faith, for faith includes trust in the promises of God, which by its very nature looks to the future. We are to look unto the Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith, who endured the cross because of the hope that was set before Him. We also have an eternal hope, to be with the Lord forever and ever in the eternal inheritance. But we must be glorified and resurrected before we can ever enter the eternal inheritance of light. As Paul put it in Col 1:12 “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

So I would like to see several things this morning about this great subject; how God makes us fit to be partakers of this great inheritance. **First**, the figures in general used for this work of God; **Second**, why this particular work of God is necessary; **Third**, the nature of this particular work of God. **The Figures; the Necessity; the Nature.** For the last two, we will use the text we read a moment ago in 1 Corinthians 15.

I. The Figures used for this Work of God in Salvation in general.

- A. This is the reason that the Christian faith is likened to life. Eph. 2, “You hath he made alive who were dead” Life has many parts: breathing, eating, metabolism, heart pumping, brain activity. Life is not any of these considered in isolation, but is all of them connected together in organic activity. So the work of God is an organic whole. Justification is not sanctification which is not effectual calling, but just as you cannot think that life consists only of breathing and neglect eating; so you cannot think that our salvation consists only in one or two parts. Each part of the *ordo* is necessary and of the very essence of salvation.
- B. This is the reason that the Christian faith is likened to a journey. It is called the way of righteousness. It is called a strait and narrow way. It is called a path.
1. Pr 4:18 “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”
 2. Psalm 1: 1 “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful...6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”
 3. Zacharias said that Jesus would, [Lu 1:79] “give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”
 4. Jesus said that He is the “way” as well as the truth and the life.
 5. 2Pet. 2:21: the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ is called the “way of righteousness.”
 6. Way implies travel and progress. There is a beginning, a middle, and end to the journey. The ORDO SALUTIS is a brief way of describing the way that God has ordained for our feet in the way of righteousness.
- C. This is the reason that salvation is called “Light.” There are many parts to light, chiefly the source, the transmission, and the reception. Natural light is composed of the sun as the source, the rays as the transmission, the eye as the reception. All are necessary if the light is to do us good. Salvation is also called “hearing,” and “feeling” and “tasting” as well as many other figures. But you get the idea. The salvation of the soul is a many splendored thing, involving many aspects of the work of God and involving every Person of the Holy Trinity.
- D. The sum of these things is Titus 1:1-3, the text of this entire series of sermons: 1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; 2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; 3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior; Note:
1. There is a faith that pertains to God’s elect.
 2. There is a truth that is according to godliness.
 3. This truth is to be acknowledged and received. We don’t make the light or the life; we receive it as the gift of God.

4. This life is manifested by preaching, beginning with the Apostles and continued by the faithful servants of the Lord.

But let us look at our text for points Two and Three.

II. **The Necessity for the work of God.** Vs. 50: “Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

A. We are now in the image of Adam, who is under the curse. Hence, we are subject to sin, corruption, and death. This is not the estate of those who live in the new heaven and the new earth.

1. Paul is not saying that the New Heaven and the New Earth is only a place for spirits and that there will be no physical bodies there. This idea is refuted by what follows and the assurance that the dead will surely rise, just as Jesus did.
2. “Flesh and blood” means the present image of Adam.
 - a. The image of Adam is corruptible: it will die and decay in the dust of the earth.
 - b. The image of Adam is mortal: it will die. Even now the body is dying.
 - c. This “flesh and blood” cannot inherit the kingdom of God, for it lies under the curse of God.
 - d. We cannot go to heaven unless we are rid of this present body of death.

B. There are two great realities that we must face as the children of Adam.

1. The strength and victory of death. The graveyards of the world testify to the reality of death. We must come to grips with this reality. Death comes in many forms and many sizes. “It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment” the writer of Hebrews says. That brings us to the second reality:
2. The sting of death, which is sin. The reason death has dominion over us is because of sin.
 - a. First of all, Adam’s sin. You and I die because of the curse upon the children of Adam. It was by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin.
 - b. Second, your own sin: both by nature and by action.

C. Either of these two realities would make it impossible for us to enter into the glories of our inheritance. “Flesh and blood” cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Corruption cannot inherit incorruption. If God took us to heaven in our present condition, we would stink up the place. But that brings us to our Third Point:

III. **The Nature of this work of God: specifically in Resurrection and Glorification**

A. At the resurrection, death is swallowed up in victory. Life comes forth from the grave. Verses 42-49

1. The corruptible is raised incorruptible.
2. Dishonor in glory
3. Weakness in power
4. Natural in Spiritual
5. The image of Adam in the image of Christ

6. The earthy in the heavenly
- B. So death is overcome by life; sin is overcome by righteousness. The victory of death is turned into the victory of life; the sting of sin is turned into blessedness and joy. I wouldn't miss it for the world.
- C. But what of those alive at His coming? They also experience a kind of death, for they are changed just as those raised from the dead. Their new body will arise from the old and leave the old behind as they are changed into His likeness.
1. In a moment, the twinkling of an eye. No man knows the day nor the hour.
 2. The trumpet sounds: as the trumpet in Israel called forth all the men of war; so the last trumpet will summon all the dead, as Jesus himself told us:
 - a. John 5: 28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.
 - b. 1 Thess. “13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (1Th 4:13-18)
 - c. 1Pet. 1: 2-9: “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”

Application

1. You and I must realize that there is no New Heaven and New Earth for us without resurrection and glorification. These present bodies are bodies of sin and corruption and must be changed.
2. Faith includes hope by necessity. We must therefore lay hold on the promises, pressing on to the hope that is set before us.
3. We must set our affections on things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of the Father. Our conversation and citizenship is in heaven, and we are strangers in a world of sin and death.
4. We must believe and trust in Christ alone, for He has sent to us His Spirit; He has begun a good work in us that He will perform until the Day of Christ. We must cling to Christ as our only refuge; our only safety, for we have no continuing city here, but we seek one that is to come.
5. Be not weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not! As Romans 2:7 says: those who by patience continuance seek for glory and honor and immortality will reap eternal life.
6. This is the hope and the inheritance of the saints.
 - a. 1Th 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?
 - b. 1Th 3:13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.
 - c. 1Jo 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

May God bless you. Amen and Amen.