



Broomfield Presbyterian Church Ministry of the Word

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Our Destiny

Kingdom Living, Part 5

We owe much in our language to Greek. For example, our word *angel* comes from the Greek term *αγγελος* (*aggelos*), which means messenger. Our term *hippopotamus* comes from two Greek words *ιππος* (*hippos*) which means horse and *ποταμος* (*potamos*) which means river; thus a hippopotamus is a river horse. The common words *phone*, *match*, *agony* and many others come from Greek terms.

As we continue to look at Kingdom Living we are going to continue looking at Kingdom Living's catalyst — another term that finds its root in Greek. A catalyst is that which loosens or releases something. For example in chemistry a catalyst is a substance that modifies the rate of a chemical reaction or precipitates a process or event. And thus this morning we are discussing a passage which “loosens” or “releases” our ability to Live for the Kingdom.

The previous three chapters of Philippians have exhorted the Philippians unto Christ-likeness. Christ-likeness has its passion the longing to fellowship with Christ¹ and to live holy, pure, undefiled lives.² Paul wraps up his exhortation with these words, “Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us” (Philippians 3:17). In essence what he is saying is, “follow those who follow Christ!”

Now following Christ is easy to say, but much more difficult to do. When one is being persecuted and tried — as were the Philippians³ and your future is uncertain, and happiness in life has all but dissolved it is very hard to follow Christ. Consequently, in Philippians 3:20-21 Paul turns his focus to that which will unleash the Philippians passion for Christ and dissolve the hesitancy that they might have when it comes to Kingdom Living.

¹ Compare Philippians 3:8-11

² Compare Philippians 3:12-16

³ Compare Philippians 1:30

What is this catalyzing agent? As we have read already it is the knowledge of our citizenship⁴ and our coming Savior and our longing for His return.⁵ And now we are going to look at our future.

Our Future

Philippians 3:21, “**Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body**, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”⁶”

Now an alternate reading to this verse is found in the New American Standard Classic version. It reads this way: “Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory.” What a phenomenal statement this is as it relates to the future!

Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”

Talk about a future and a hope. According to Philippians 3, the day is coming when God will conform our bodies to Christ’s!

Dwelling In A Humble State

Philippians 3:21, “**Who shall change our vile body**, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.”

The phrase could literally be rendered this way: “Who will change the form of the bodies *which belong to* our humiliation...” Paul is not saying that are bodies are evil or lowly as a casual reading of the King James Version might cause one to infer. Rather Paul is saying that someday God will transform our bodies that exist in state of humiliation.

Now this is a big deal. In order to properly understand our future we must understand our present. There is nothing bad, vile, or evil about our physical bodies or the physical world — God created it. And yet, according to the Platonic thought of Paul's day the physical world was evil. And thus, the body at best was viewed as the prison house of the soul. Accordingly, the physical — those things that one can taste, touch smell, and see — were deemed to be evil. And all of this led to two extreme: asceticism or gross immorality.

Now it is amazing how the past has become our present. In the fourth century A.D. a movement called Neo-Platonism arose which said that the physical world — that which could be touched, tasted, or felt — was evil. And thus, if you wanted to keep yourself pure, you had to separate yourself from the world. This view partially is what led to the monastic movement of that time.

Now believe it or not, Neo-Platonism is with us even today. It is the thinking that evil is “out there.” And that if one desires to guard against sin separate yourself from the world. It's what has led to the multi-million dollar industry of Christian music, Christian clothing, Christian jewelry, Christian art, Christian food, Christian chewing gum, Testamints, and much, much more.

⁴ Compare Philippians 3:20

⁵ Compare Philippians 3:20

⁶ ος μετασχηματισει το σωμα της ταπεινωσεως ημων εις το γενεσθαι αυτο συμμορφον τω σωματι της δοξης αυτου κατα την ενεργειαν του δυνασθαι αυτον και υποταξαι εαυτω τα παντα

And yet family of God listen, the physical world is not evil! Rather, according to our text this morning it is in a state of humiliation!

Romans 8:18-21, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

There are two phrases I want you to notice in this passage. First, “For the creature was made subject to vanity.” This phrase refers to something that is empty, purposeless, or transitory. It carries the idea of being unsuccessful, unable to achieve a goal or purpose. The implication is that no part of creation exists as God originally intended. According to the definition of this word, creation *is bound*; it is unable to fulfill its ultimate purpose. Hendriksen put it this way:

“The creation is subject to arrested development and constant decay. Though it aspires, it is not able fully to achieve. Though it blossoms, it does not reach the point of adequately bearing fruit. It may be compared to a very powerful world-champion boxer or wrestler, who is chained in such a manner that he cannot make use of his tremendous physical prowess.”⁷

Now it is important to note that creation's futility was not of its own accord. God did not create the world with a built-in imperfection that hindered it from fulfilling its ultimate end; it is not evil. Rather, creation was subjected to futility on account of our sin. With that, notice the second phrase in verse 21.

“Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

The idea conveyed here is that creation is in slavery to decay. In physics, the law of entropy states that matter and energy constantly undergo degradation and disorder. And thus, the natural bent of the universe — whether of humans, animals, plants, or the inanimate elements of the earth and heavens — is obviously and demonstrably downward. In 1847 Henry Lyte wrote this thought in his hymn, “change and decay in all around I see”⁸

From these two descriptions we conclude that the world in which we live is not evil. Rather, it has been robbed of its purpose! God created the physical world ready to fulfill the purpose for which it was created. But when Adam rebelled against God, the world was cursed and thus was enslaved or subjected to humiliation.

Genesis 3:17-19, “And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

⁷ Hendriksen, NTC, page 268

⁸ Compare Trinity Hymnal (new) page 335

Man now lives in a state aptly described as one of “sin and misery” or one of vileness or humiliation! The things we want to do, we don't. The things we don't want to do, we do. The animals whom Adam named now fear us. Change and decay touches everything. We know of war, sickness, tragedy, suffering, disease, disaster, immoral passions, immoral desires, sick lusts, sick people, murder, violence, neglect, and outright rebellion. Henry Law put it this way:

“Change' is the defect of things below. Our brightest morn often ends in storm. Summer's radiance gives place to winter's gloom. The smiling flower soon lies withered. The babbling brook is soon a parched channel. The friend who smiled, smiles no more friendly welcomes. Bereavement weeps where once the family beamed with domestic joy. Gardens wither into deserts. Babylons crumble into unsightly ruins. On all things a sad inscription writes: Fleeting! Transient! Vanishing!⁹”

Family of God this is the state in which we live. This is the point of Paul's text. Currently we live in a state whose productivity has been banned. It is not a state of honor, but humiliation — and thus: change, decay, and futility!

Transformed Bodies

Now in the midst of all of this, notice that God gives us promise.

Philippians 3:21, “**Who shall change**¹⁰ our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Someday God will transform our bodies. The word *change* is used of Satan and his ministers of evil who change their form and so disguise themselves that they look like servants of God.¹¹ Used in our text, it does not refer to a disguise, but the literal, physical changing of our bodies into something else!

1 Corinthians 15:51-53, “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

From this we conclude that the transformation spoken about here will involve our earthly bodies! We will not spend eternity in a different kind of existence. Rather we will spend the rest of eternity in a physical world in our current bodies — yet they will be transformed. Thomas Boston put it this way:

“At the resurrection, men shall not appear with other bodies, as to substance, than those which they now have, and which are laid down in the grave; but with the self-same bodies, endowed with other qualities. The very notion of a resurrection implies this, since nothing can be said to rise again, but that which falls.”¹²

Paul answers the question of what kind of body we shall possess in glory.

⁹ Henry Law, *Christ is All*

¹⁰ μετασχηματιζω metaschematizo

¹¹ Compare 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

¹² Thomas Boston, *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*, page 380

1 Corinthians 15:42-44, “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; 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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”

A perishable body is raised imperishable. The word *imperishable* means without sickness, decay, deterioration, or death.

A dishonored body is raised in glory. Glory means to be perfected for pleasing, praising, and enjoying God.

A weak body is raised in power. Power means that we will no longer dwell in weakness. Whatever our heavenly spirits determine to do our heavenly bodies will be able to accomplish.

A natural body is raised a spiritual body. A spiritual body is one be fit for an heavenly existence. Just as a “natural body” is a body fit for life on this earth so also a “spiritual body” is a body fit for life in heaven.

And so truly we will spend eternity in a physical state with physical bodies in the presence of our Lord and Savior who Himself will spend the rest of eternity in a physical body! However, our bodies will have been *transformed* to comport to the life we shall live in eternity future!

Conformed to Christ’s Glory

This all involves our future. Our future will include the conforming of our bodies to Christ’s glory.

Philippians 3:21, “Who shall change our vile body, **that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body**, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

As with the first part of this verse, where Paul is NOT talking about “vile bodies” BUT “bodies of humiliation.” So also here Paul is not talking about a “glorious body” rather a better way to express this is a body, which exists in a glorified state!

When Jesus Christ returns, He is going to transform our bodies into conformity with His body — a body that comports with a glorified existence.

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.’”

“Fantastic! Our bodies are going to be as Christ's!” And yet again what does this mean? What is the nature of Christ's glorified body?

The Nature of Christ’s Glorified Body

First of all notice that Christ's resurrection body was the same body that He lived in while He walked the earth. The wounds from His crucifixion were still visible.¹³ He could be touched and handled.¹⁴ He

¹³ Compare John 20:27

¹⁴ Compare Luke 24:39

looked human in every regard.¹⁵ The disciples on the road to Emmaus never questioned His humanity. He ate real, earthly food.¹⁶ He was identifiable by sight as “Jesus.”¹⁷

In contrast to those who say that the physical is evil, Christ became and remains physical/corporeal! In other words, our present mode of existence will be our future! And yet, His body also had/has otherworldly properties too. Christ could pass through walls.¹⁸ He could appear in different forms so His identity was not immediately obvious.¹⁹ He could suddenly appear out of nowhere.²⁰ He could ascend directly into heaven in bodily form.²¹ And in the New Heavens and New Earth, Christ's glorified body is described as shining like the sun in its strength.²²

Now from our passage and others, we conclude that such will be the case when it comes to our bodies in heaven! When we enter the final state we will enter it in the same bodies that we have today, and yet our bodies will be conformed to the image of Christ. And thus they will be fit for life in the New Heavens and the New Earth. They will know no pain, decay, sickness, sorrow, injury, sadness, or fatigue.²³ They will be able to gaze upon God with the unaided eye and live.²⁴ They will walk with Christ.²⁵ They will know no evil.²⁶

Now I don't know about you, but this moves me! This creates in me a longing and a thirsting for the return of Christ when our salvation will be fully consummated! This creates in me a disdain for the lies that Satan has used to deceive the nations. It makes me long for the day when I will behold Christ face to face. And yet, you have heard of the expression, “So heavenly minded, no earthly good”?

So What?

What difference ought this to make in my life today?

Family of God, in closing I want you to reconsider a passage we looked at earlier Romans 8:23. After describing the groaning of creation, Paul wrote this:

Romans 8:23, ‘And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.’”

Truly we have a glorious future. And this passage just adds its voice to the choir as it describes eternity future as that time when we shall be adopted and our bodies redeemed.

Yet what does this mean? I thought in Christ we already were adopted.²⁷ And haven't we already been

¹⁵ Compare Luke 24:13-18

¹⁶ Compare Luke 24:42-43

¹⁷ Compare John 20:18-20

¹⁸ Compare John 20:19

¹⁹ Compare Mark 16:12

²⁰ Compare Luke 24:36

²¹ Compare Luke 24:51 and Acts 1:9

²² Compare Revelation 1:16

²³ Compare Revelation 21:4 and Isaiah 40:31

²⁴ Compare 1 John 3:2, and 1 Corinthians 13:12

²⁵ Compare Revelation 21:3

²⁶ Compare Revelation 22:15

²⁷ Compare Galatians 4:6-7

redeemed?²⁸ Indeed!

Adoption

Judaism did not practice adoption and so the concept clearly was Roman. Now in the culture of Rome, a child was not the official son of his father until he was formally adopted. That meant that sonship was not based on parentage, but the official act of adoption. Now because of its obvious great importance, the process of Roman adoption involved several carefully prescribed legal procedures. The first step totally severed the boy's legal and social relationship to his natural family. The second step placed him permanently into his new family.

Now in Christ we indeed have been fully adopted by Christ and therefore have all the rights and privileges of sons of God. However for the sake of instruction, Paul here is separating the two steps of adoption with this implication that while legally we have been adopted into the household of God, nevertheless we have not entered the final state and thus our permanent home.

Thus, family of God we, like the Roman child in the process of adoption, groan with eager anticipation for the consummation of our adoption when we literally and physically shall be placed in our heavenly family in the new heavens and new earth!

Our Redemption

And yet, that is not all.

As it relates to our redemption, would you notice that the word for redeem means to “buy back.” Now in the context of Paul's day this was packed full of meaning. In the Apostolic age the Roman Empire had as many as six million slaves, and the buying and selling of them was a major business. If a person wanted to free a loved one or friend who was a slave he could buy that slave for himself and then grant him freedom, testifying to their deliverance with a written certificate.

Now the word used in this certificate to designate the freeing of a slave was “Redemption.”

Now in Christ we have already been redeemed — bought back! Nevertheless we still await the final and full redemption of our bodies when they will be free from the presence of sin.

To be caught up in the middle of adoption we are anticipating our final home. Awaiting the final and full redemption of our bodies. This is to affirm that our bodies and our lives are not our own, but Christ's! He at this moment has a claim on us!

Therefore as we anxiously await the return of Christ, we do so knowing that Christ has placed His claim upon us! In Christ we stand on holy ground! Our thoughts, desires, and actions all are done in His presence.

1 Corinthians 6:20, “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

As Paul endeavored to encourage the Philippians in their walks with Christ by unleashing the Philippians' passion for Christ and by dissolving any hesitancy that they might have when it came to holy living he paraded before their eyes the glorious truth that when Christ returns He is going to complete that which

²⁸ Compare Titus 2:14

He began by transforming the body of our humble estate into conformity with the body of His glory.

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About the Preacher

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