

Sermon 90: Romans 8:30: Glorified

OUTLINE

Glorification and sin

Glorification and Christ

INTRODUCTION

Today we look at the final link in the unbreakable chain in redemption, glorification. I am not sure what your expectations are as you approach this last link in the chain. Many would feel a bit of anti-climax, for justification was the high point and glorification is like the cheap free gift that we get added on to our main purchase. If that was your assumption coming in here this morning then think again. Too often when we think of salvation we limit it to our justification by faith, but Paul's notion of salvation goes much farther than merely being made righteous by Christ's righteousness. Paul sees salvation being God saving us from every effect of sin not merely the guilt of sin. So then glorification is not the cheap free gift we get added but the grand finale, the climax, the pinnacle of God's work in saving us. Glorification is not the cheap gift added to justification but justification is a stepping stone to glorification. Glorification is the zenith of God's work in salvation and the great goal to which God has been moving His plan from the beginning.

Let us think on this question through the lens of glorification: why did God make man? Let me in introduction to this message answer this question and try to show how every major doctrine in the bible serves God's grand scheme to glorify us.

Before God created anything there was only God, self-existent and self-sufficient, He needed nothing for His existence and was perfectly joyful and content in the love relationships within the Trinity. We infer from their known relations that are revealed in the Scriptures how the Father would have delighted in His Son, the Son loved and served the Father, the Spirit magnifying the Son; each one reciprocally magnifying, serving and loving the other. God as Trinity freely willed to create in order to share and give themselves to others as well in order to further magnify and glorify themselves. God created man in order to be a covenant partner with Him. Another person brought into this love triangle and blessed with its overflowing love. He sought to make a creature that He could pour out upon His highest blessings and honours, a creature who could enjoy His deepest and strongest love as a further gift of love to the Son. So He made man in His image in order to be compatible with Him, and He predestined that man would be conformed to the image of the Son in who He delights immeasurably, that we might come under the flood of God's love that is poured out upon the Son. Father, Son and Spirit planned a wife for the Son to be brought into the family. Of course, God would always maintain the Creator-creature distinction, but the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit would bring us into the closest proximity to Himself enabling us to be 'partakers of the divine nature' through our union with God in the Son by the Spirit, but without our becoming divine in any way. We must be careful not to make our own creation all about us but rather about God. The Father delights to give a bride to the

Son who He loves; the Son delights in winning a bride and presenting her to the Father; the Father and Son delight in the work of the Spirit in preparing the beauty of the bride for entrance into the family. Please do not infer from this analogy that we in anyway become divine nor will we enjoy all that the Son enjoys of the Father's love. In glory we will be at best glorified man, but the Son is always the God-man, infinitely more in the Father's eyes. Paul makes this desire to glorify the Son in us bearing His likeness in Romans 8:29, 'For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.' Jesus Christ was resurrected and received a glorified humanity, we too will be resurrected and glorified having a body reflecting His glory for we will be like Him. This will be done that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. This bears two meanings. It means that He will be first born in other words that He will be first to be resurrected and this will guarantee that many will follow. But the word firstborn more often bears the meaning of preeminent, in other words God has resurrected Christ and a people in order that He might be preeminent and glorified by those people. The Father has secured worship and glory for the Son by the Son securing a people through His resurrection.

This notion of God glorifying Himself through the saving of a people who will be conformed to Christ's image is the plot that drives the Bible.

God created the world as the theatre where the main act of God dressing us in the glory of His Son would happen. The creation of man in the image of God in the Garden of Eden was a preamble to this main event. However, Adam who was perfect but not yet glorified sinned and instead of winning glory for us by his obedience he plunged the human race into sin and disgrace. This set the scene for Christ, the Second and Last Adam who would have to come and by His obedience win for us the glory that Adam failed to win. Sin is defined by a negative reaction to this glory that God seeks to perfect us with. Sin is the antithesis to God's perfected image in us. God's response to Adam and Eve's sin was to dress them in the skins of a substitute in anticipation of the imputed righteousness of Christ that we would one day receive by faith, as well as an anticipation of the new glory that God would one day clothe us with in resurrection.

Christ came and blazed a trail through death becoming the firstfruits of the dead at His resurrection. His resurrection is the prototype and a proleptic glimpse of the final resurrection. Our regeneration is a participation in that resurrection; our progressive sanctification is the growing effect of that life conforming us even now to Christ's image bearing the fruits of the future kingdom, even now. The sealing of the Spirit is the guarantee that that day of glory is coming. Our adoption is the partial enjoyment of the blessings that when we are glorified we will receive in full.

For now as we wait for that day of glory only tasting it in part but not yet in full we remind ourselves of our certain future. In baptism we show in symbol what will one day be true of our very bodies, that we will, like Christ be resurrected in glory to never die again. In the Lord's Supper as often as we remember we proclaim Christ's death until He comes, anticipating in our humble meal the great feast of the marriage supper of the Lamb.

We are not saved until we are glorified. God will not stop until He has brought us to this point, where He has dressed us in His Son, His righteousness, His glorified humanity, His honours, His Spirit. So now we see that salvation is not exhausted by our justification, the gospel which is the good news of God's power for our salvation is not exercised merely until we are justified, but all the way until we are glorified. This is the point that Paul is making in Romans 8:30. Let's look then at the word glorified as it appears in this verse. And then we will examine the doctrine of glorification in relation to sin and to Christ.

Glorification and sin

Firstly, as we consider this word we must remember that the whole point of the chapter from 8:17 is to assure us of the certainty of the hope of glory. Paul has been arguing why we will receive our inheritance as children of God, even though we suffer greatly in this fallen world, God has given us His Spirit and God is working all things together for the good and glory of those who love Him. His place is a plan begun in eternity will finally be realised in us being glorified. As we come to this word we come to it in the midst of a flow of thought that is intended to impress upon us its certainty.

As we look at the word glorified we must observe one peculiarity, the word is in the past tense. Why would Paul speak about a future event, future for everyone except Christ as if it were already past? Some have wrongly thought that Paul is just keeping with the past tenses that he began earlier in the chain. Paul was simply concerned with literary convention and a consistent use of the tense. This however is not Paul's method. No, the reason that the word is in the past tense is significant and a reason for assurance. It could be one of two possibilities. Firstly, God has decreed in eternity past that we will be glorified, therefore it is as certain as anything that God has decreed. The past tense then is a reference to when God decreed. Secondly, others have thought that the reference is to our union with Christ in His resurrection. Since Christ has been resurrected from the dead and He is the firstfruits of the resurrection harvest, and the rest of us who are believers who have already been grafted into that life in our new birth and have received the seal of the Spirit as a guarantee of our glorification, we could see His glorification as our own. Any future resurrection on our part is merely the outworking of the glorification that the head of the body has already experienced and our inevitable resurrection is merely the outworking of this already past event. Any way you look at it the past tense affirms the certainty of it and assures us of the final outcome.

Glorification we have said is the final stroke for the total eradication of the effects of sin in us personally. It is the final act of God for our salvation where sin, death and Satan are finally and permanently banished from ourselves and then creation. Let us view the other parts of God's actions against sin and how glorification caps them. Here is a simple way to see how God deals with sin dealing the decisive blow as it concerns us in glorification.

Regeneration/new birth: in regeneration we experience the breaking of the power of sin, a change wrought in us by the Spirit where sin's holding power over us is broken as can now

love God and hate sin, believe and repent, things otherwise impossible for the natural man to do.

Justification: justification is God's provision against the guilt of sin whereby we are declared righteous by the imputing of Christ's alien righteousness to our account by virtue of our union with Him by the Spirit. We receive this gift of righteousness by faith, as a gift, by grace, we do not merit it but receive it as we trust in Christ's works not our own for righteousness.

Sanctification: sanctification is the progressive action of God to mortify sin and nurture the fruit of the Spirit in our characters. By the Spirit we are now able to make progress in holiness, our progress will never be complete, and we will still face temptation and have to war against indwelling sin. However, on account of our participation in Christ's resurrection power we fight against sin from a position of victory and can expect true though slow progress.

Death: death would not ordinarily be seen as a victory but in truth the death of a Christian sees them experience a growth in holiness and a freedom of sin that we cannot attain while in the body. Hebrews 12:23 talks about the 'spirits of righteous men made perfect,' this is a description of an act of perfecting us from sin in our spirits. Being freed from the fallen body we are then perfected in spirit. Though perfect in spirit we are not yet complete, for we do not yet have new bodies.

Glorification: glorification is God's final act on our part in our salvation where He will give to us new bodies in the likeness of His beloved Son's perfected and resurrected humanity. Some will have died and will experience the uniting of a perfected spirit to a resurrected body. Others who have not died but who are alive at the Second coming of Christ they will experience a transformation where in the twinkling of an eye, without dying they will be glorified. It is this experience of glorification apart from death that Paul describes as further clothed, where death is described as unclothed, 2 Cor. 5:4, 'For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened---not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.'

Judgement: the judgement will see the removal of satan and all those who imitated him removed from God's creation sent to their eternal punishment in the lake of fire.

New heavens and the New earth: then God will finally make all things new where all the final effects of the cursed creation will enjoy Christ's reign over sin, and we will be forever with God in a perfect creation, never to sin again, never to be tempted again, never to die again.

At present we groan, we wait in anticipation of that day. Romans 7:14-25 describes the inner war we face on a daily basis as we struggle against remaining sin. We live with one foot in Christ's resurrection and the other foot in the world. We are a new creation in Christ but we are not yet perfected. We continue to experience some of the hardest fights of our lives and at times we suffer in terrible and debilitating ways. But this is our confidence; we know how this story ends. Christ will come and all things will be made new, we will be glorified!

Glorification and Christ

Glorification is monergistic act of God. Glorification is an act that God does without our contribution. Just as He did not need us to help Him create the universe or to resurrect Jesus from the dead, likewise He does not need our help in glorifying us. And just like any other aspect of our salvation our glorification is done 'in Christ.' There has been no part of our salvation that has been done apart from our Mediator, Christ.

We were elect in Christ before the foundation of the world, God chose to love us in Christ and not leave us in Adam (Eph. 1:4-5).

When God called us by the Spirit of Christ He caused us to participate in Christ's resurrection life and we were born again (Eph. 2:5).

When we were justified we were justified in Christ. His righteousness is seen as ours because we are grafted into Him (1 Cor. 1:30).

And Paul tells us that when we are one day glorified we will be glorified because of His resurrection, 1 Cor. 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.' It is because He lives that we will live also.

Our glorification is a participation in His resurrection power. Our glorification is in conformity to His resurrection body. Death could not hold Christ and death will not be able to hold us. As surely as Christ is raised, we shall be raised. As Christ has risen to never die again, we too will be glorified to never die again. There is much encouragement to be gained from considering our glorification in relation to Christ. Your resurrection is as certain as His.

We saw at the beginning that God sought to glorify Himself in the creation of a bride for Christ that would be conformed to His own glorious human image. God has done this for His own glory as well as our highest good. Our highest good is found in His glory. We who are worthy only of hell, we who have no claim on any of God's blessings are dressed in the righteousness of God's beloved Son, are being progressively transformed into the image of His Son, will be resurrected into a humanity that can never die better than Adam's like the Son, and will enjoy the rewards of the Son and live forever under the flood of God's love being poured out upon the Son. Adam was the crown of the new creation but that crown which should have magnified God was tarnished by sin. But now Christ has come and succeeded where Adam failed and He has been glorified and achieved what Adam never could. He has become the perfect human worshipper of God, the obedient Son, He is the crown of creation that brings glory to God and we are all jewels in His crown, jewels that reflect something of His glory to the praise of God. The world likes to speak of humanity's great accomplishments, all the world's success is nothing compared to Christ's accomplishments and what will be made of us. It was C. S. Lewis who said that if you could see the Christian as they will one day be dressed, in the glory of Christ, you would feel very tempted to worship them. All of that glory is Christ's, God has wrought this and nothing can undo it, this is the inevitable conclusion to the victory that has already begun.

