

Communion Meditation 10/17/10 **Benefits at Death, part 2**

Question 37 What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?

Answer 37 of the WSC: The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

Last week we looked at how our souls at death are made perfect in holiness and immediately pass into glory.

And then the second half of the answer says that our bodies, being still united to Christ, rest in their graves until the resurrection. Death separates our body and our soul, and then our body, for a believer or an unbeliever, returns to dust (Acts 13.36, corruption). But the body of the believer is reserved for glory at the resurrection, and the body of the unbeliever is reserved for destruction.

Now for the believer, this brings up the fact that our bodies are united to Christ. Our soul AND our body was purchased, was redeemed by the Lord. "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor 6) Your spirit or soul is His, and your body is His, and both are meant for His glory.

And since we are stewards of what God has given us, and we will have these bodies in a glorified state in heaven, we have to ask, what should I do now to keep what He has made, and what He has bought, in good condition? A steward has to give an account at some point.

I think we all know how to do this. We sleep enough so this body, which is His, can function, we eat what our body needs, we work hard sometimes and push our bodies to keep them strong (that's why I asked you guys to come cut and split wood!), we take rests and vacations to be refreshed, we pray to deal with stress which debilitates our body (which chopping wood helps with also by the way!) Of course people can go too far in these areas and justify it for the reason of caring for the body.

1 Cor 3.16,17 "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

So it is a matter of obedience, and of pleasing God, to be good stewards of our bodies now. And although our bodies decay and turn to dust, at the resurrection, they will be raised up, and our soul will be reunited with our glorified body. And so, as Rodney shared several months ago, we must also consider how to deal with our body even at death, because it is the Lord's. It is another aspect of doing all for the

glory of God, a matter of obedience.

Romans 8 ...”we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.” We long for that now, and we will long for it as we wait for the resurrection.

2 Cor 5 has a related passage, “For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.” Clothed in a glorified body, dwelling in glory with the saints and with the Lord, in holiness.

In 1 Cor 15 it tells us that ..”the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” It goes on to say, “ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. ‘

This communion table is celebrating victory! As I said last week, when we come to the table of the Lord each week, we are remembering that He became a man, he took on a body like ours, then he suffered in the body, yet without sin. And his body died, but by the power of God was raised, and so we, in Christ, have that same hope. We should not fear death or the grave. We are in Christ, and will be raised as he was. This is part of His amazing grace to us.

Job said, “For I know that my redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold...” In the midst of all he was going through, and he of all people knew the weakness of his flesh, he had the eternal hope of seeing his Redeemer in the flesh, with his eyes.

As weak and frail as our bodies are, they are gifts from God, miraculously made and formed, and are part of the redemption. Not to be overlooked because they are supposedly “not spiritual”, but to be cared for and nourished, and to thank God for.

Lord, thank you for the hope of the resurrection, and that we can rejoice that we will have glorified bodies. And we thank you that we have victory over death through the power of your death and resurrection. Help us to be better stewards of the body you have given us, and use it and all things from you to glorify you and build up Your kingdom. In Jesus’ name. Amen