

Pentecost 3
June 14, 2015

"You Have Eyes That Always See Your Future Glory"

2 CORINTHIANS 4:13-18

It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. ¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. ¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

This past week I saw a blind man walking near the busy intersection of Bradley and Union Valley Parkway. I was amazed at how he made his way on the sidewalk with his white stick in front of him. By tapping the sidewalk with his white stick he could tell he was approaching the busy intersection. He reached out with his right hand and found the button he need to push to cross the intersection. As I drove home for lunch, I thanked the Lord for the blessing of having eyes to be able to see.

As much as we appreciate what our physical eyes can see, we appreciate even more what we see with our eyes of faith. With our eyes of faith we are able to see everything Jesus did to save us from our sin. With our eyes of faith we are even able to see the glory he has planned for us in heaven.

The Apostle Paul found great strength in being able to keep his eyes focused on the future glory that was waiting for him. That gave him strength to speak boldly about a bodily resurrection on the last day. It also helped him make it through the hard days of life here on this earth. He always knew the best was yet to come. You are so blessed to have eyes that see the future glory that is yours with Jesus. This profoundly affects how you speak and how you live. You know the best is yet to come.

Your future glory affects how you speak

Because of what you see coming in the future, you cannot just keep this to yourself. You need to talk about it because it is more real to you than what is happening to you in your daily life. Paul writes, "It is written; "I believed; therefore I have spoken.' With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence."

Paul could not keep quiet about Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead and his own bodily resurrection on the last day. His eyes of faith saw Jesus rising from the dead and his eyes of faith saw his own resurrection on the last day. Like the Psalmist in Psalm 116, he just had to speak about what he had seen. Psalm 116 begins with the words, "I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy... Then he goes on to praise the Lord for delivering him from

death. Jesus' resurrection from the dead and our resurrection from the dead on the last day are so real to us. We have to speak about. We just cannot keep this to ourselves.

Why are we so confident in our own bodily resurrection from the dead on the last day? Paul says we believe because we know that one who raised Jesus from the dead will also raise us up on the last day. It does not say, "we think" or "we hope" but it says, "we know." I know that someday I am going to die, unless Jesus comes in glory to take all of us home before that day comes. I also know that after I die I will be raised to life again. My reason for believing this and knowing it is real comes from the fact that our heavenly Father raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus said, "Whoever lives and believes in me will never die." Even though we die, we are raised to life again with glorified bodies similar to his glorified body.

This past week in our midweek Bible study we came across this verse in Philippians 3:20-21: "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." Your eyes have been opened to see that your real place of glory is not here on this earth but in the kingdom that God has for you that begins in this life and lasts forever.

What will happen to us when Jesus comes in glory? Paul writes, "The one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence." Our Father in heaven will present Jesus and us to himself in his presence on the last day. Perhaps you have been to a wedding where the pastor says at the end of the wedding service, "I now present to you....." When Jesus returns he will raise us to life and together with him we stand in the presence of our heavenly Father.

Here is how this is described in Ephesians 5. It says that Jesus gave himself for the church "to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing of water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without spot or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless." Jesus washes us clean to present us to himself as a church that is holy and blameless so the heavenly Father can also present us to himself as holy and blameless along with Jesus on the last day. The Revelation says we will stand before the throne of God with white robes that have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. This is all so real to us because we see this with our eyes of faith that have been given to us. We know this day is coming when we will be raised to life again. We pray that it comes soon.

How can Paul say for sure that he will be raised to life again on the last day? How can I be sure that I will be raised to life again on the last day? Our hope for this is not in our performance or how well we do as all other religions in the world teach about life after death. Our hope is based on what Christ has done to purify us and make us clean.

Think of a bride on her wedding day. Oh, how busy she is that morning as her family and friends help her get ready for the day. They take her to have her hair done. They gather around to dress her and help her with her makeup. Then they put her dress on her. They are with her at the church helping her with the final touches. She steps out to walk down the aisle and the crowd stands to honor the bride.

There is nothing I can do to get myself ready to see Jesus and be raised to life again. Jesus has done it all for me. Imagine a bride on her wedding day crawling through a sewer, dressed in dirty, tattered rags, never showering, never washing her hair, smelling terribly. That is where I am because of my sin. I have crawled through the sewers of sin. I am unfit bride for Christ. Then Jesus washes me clean and presents me to himself as it says "without spot or wrinkle." With

absolute confidence we can say with Paul "We know that the one who raised Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus." We have seen this with our eyes of faith and we know it is real.

What you see with your eyes of faith is what other Christians throughout the world are also seeing? What is going to happen to the Christians who were captured by Islamic State terrorists in Northern Africa? Some will die for their faith, yet with eyes of faith they will die believing they will be raised to life again. Paul reminds the Corinthians who had some doubts about the resurrection on the last day, "All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God." I am not just thankful that I have eyes to see my resurrection on the last day. I am thankful you share this hope with me. I am thankful other Christians all over the world have this same hope that we have. How can we not speak about this and talk about this? It is more real than anything else we may experience in life. It also profoundly affects our everyday living.

Your future glory affects how you live

Listen to Paul speak about how his hope in a bodily resurrection profoundly affected how he dealt with the challenges of life. "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day." The Greek word for wasting away is used in Luke 12:33 where Jesus speaks about clothes that are eaten by moths. What happens to our bodies in this life? They waste away. They are not eaten by moths but they are subject to the process of dying that was introduced into the perfect world by Adam's fall into sin. Your body becomes weaker with age. Your hair turns gray. Your joints ache. Your skin wrinkles. Your bodily organs don't function as well as they did when you were in your prime. See the star running back from the high school football team. Later in life he has a hard time walking up a flight of stairs.

The body of the Apostle Paul certainly took some serious blows. Later in this letter to the Corinthians he writes, "I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked. I spent a day and night in the open sea...." Even though his body was like a punching bag for the Lord, he did not lose heart. Inwardly he was being renewed day by day as his eyes of faith looked at the better life that was to come.

The more Paul suffered in his body for Jesus, the more he focused his attention and his faith eyes on the eternal glory that was waiting for him. "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." The sufferings of this present life, whatever they may be, are light and momentary compared to the glory that is waiting for us in the future. These sufferings do not earn us a higher place in heaven as some might believe. They achieve eternal glory for us by making the future seem so bright compared to the darkness we may face in this life. Yes, we fix our eyes of faith on what is unseen. The Greek word for "fix" is *skopeo*. We think of the microscope that lets us see little things and the telescope that lets us see distant things far off in the distance. Dear Christians, we have glory scopes that allow us to see the glory that is waiting for us when Jesus returns. I am looking forward to our vacation to Colorado this summer. Our eyes will see green grass, and flowing streams and snow covered mountains and beautiful wild flowers. As beautiful as these things are, they are all temporary. Only the place Jesus has waiting for us is eternal. Over my parents' grave is a tombstone with the words, "Heaven is our home." Because of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, and because of his promise to raise you from the dead, you can say "Heaven is my home." Thank God for eyes, for eyes of faith that always see the glory that is yours. Amen