

2. The Completeness the Resurrection Promises

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Date: 08 April 2012

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[0 : 00] And we're going to turn to our reading this morning, which you'll find in Paul's letter to the Romans. And we're going to read together some verses from chapter 4 and then the first 11 verses of Romans chapter 5.

Picking up the thread of what Paul is speaking about in Romans chapter 4, about the fact that our salvation comes to us solely by faith through the gift of God's grace.

So Romans chapter 4 verse 13. For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world, heir of the cosmos, the universe, did not come through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

For if it is those of the law, that's the Jews only, who are to be heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath. Where there is no law, there is no transgression.

That is why it depends on faith. In order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring.

[1 : 15] Not only to those of the law, but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. Down to verse 23.

The words, it was counted to him, that is to Abraham, were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him also we have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand.

And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that sufferings produce endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame.

Because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

[2 : 40] For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, or perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die. But God shows his love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Therefore, we have now been justified by his blood. Much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved in his life.

More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Perhaps you'd take your Bibles up, and open up those words that we read there in Romans 4 and 5. On Good Friday we were thinking together at our lunchtime service about the certainty, the certainty that the cross provides.

Because the Bible tells us that our salvation depends not at all on our contribution, but entirely, entirely on God's grace alone, then our salvation through Jesus Christ can be absolutely certain.

[4 : 12] Jesus' death makes our salvation certain. Peace with God and pardon from God is certain, because in Jesus' death, God's punishment on sin is certain and complete.

And that means that God's judgment on sin has fallen. And in Jesus Christ, our Passover lamb, God's wrath has been spent.

It's been turned away. And therefore, that wrath can never, ever threaten God's people again.

Never. Jesus' death on Good Friday makes that salvation, that forgiveness, that pardon, that peace with God absolutely certain.

So where then does the resurrection fit in? Does the resurrection really matter? If Jesus' death makes our pardon certain, why does the resurrection matter?

Well, if you look at the very last verse of Romans chapter 4, you'll see there that it says Jesus was delivered up for our trespasses. He suffered judgment and death for our sins.

[5 : 26] But it goes on to say he was raised up for our justification. So clearly the resurrection of Jesus does matter. It matters deeply to us.

And it affects each one of us who believe in Jesus. Not just because it proves that Jesus is divine. Sometimes we say that.

But actually the New Testament never appeals to Jesus' resurrection as a proof that he was holy God. In fact, the resurrection proves much more about Jesus' humanity than about his deity.

Nor is it just that it proves that the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross for our sins is enough and is adequate and effective for it.

Although, of course, Jesus' resurrection does declare that. But the point that the apostle here is making in Romans is this, that without the resurrection of Jesus, our justification would not be complete.

[6 : 30] Our full salvation would not yet be certain. So I want to think about that this morning, about this completeness that the resurrection promises about our salvation.

Because it's Jesus' resurrection, make no mistake, it's Jesus' resurrection that makes our salvation complete as well as certain. And the completeness that it promises is nothing less than permanent glory and everlasting life for us in renewed human bodies, in a whole world, a whole universe that has been transformed and renewed and resurrected, as it were.

A world that is still yet to come. You see, knowing the peace with God and the pardon with God is wonderful. To be forgiven. To be in fellowship with God.

To have access to God. It is the greatest privilege that this world affords. It really is. It's what makes us people full of rejoicing. As Paul says here in Romans 5 verse 2, we rejoice.

We rejoice because we stand in grace. We have access to God. But notice he says, we rejoice in hope. In hope of the glory of God.

[7 : 53] This present rejoicing that Paul is speaking about here, this present rejoicing is not as good as it gets. There's more. Because our salvation is not yet complete.

But it certainly shall be complete because Jesus rose from the dead. And only because Jesus rose from the dead.

Jesus' resurrection is the thing that makes our salvation complete. And gives us hope of that great certainty. I want us to grasp the full extent of that real hope that we have this Easter Sunday morning.

Paul tells us we have already made a great entrance into God's salvation. But he also tells us in this passage that we have even greater expectations that are still to be fulfilled.

And that's really what these first ten verses of Romans chapter 5 make clear to us. I want us to look first then, briefly, at what's already been accomplished. Our great entrance that the cross provides for us, certainly.

[8 : 59] Look at verse 1. Already, says Paul, already we have a certain status with God. We have peace with God, he says, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And it's a free gift that we've received, he says, by grace alone. Or if you look at verse 11, he puts it another way there. He says, we've received reconciliation.

That is, we are justified. We are not condemned. The verdict of not condemned has been made upon us. And so we are right with God.

We are restored to God by his grace. That's why verse 2 tells us that we have continuous access into this grace. That's what a verdict of not condemned means, isn't it?

That's what it achieves. It achieves freedom of movement. As soon as the judge says, the verdict is not guilty, not condemned, then the prison doors are open.

[9 : 59] The person is no longer a prisoner on remand, awaiting trial and judgment, but a free person. Free to have access to all those that he loves and longs to see.

And so it is with a Christian believer. As soon as faith reaches out to receive the gift of God's grace, the gift of God's reconciliation, then there is access.

permanent access to God, a great entrance into the Father's house. I go, said Jesus to his disciples, to prepare a place for you. There's no more barrier between us and God, the barrier that

our sin created, because that has been moved away.

We have a great entrance. But there's more, as verses 3 to 5 make clear. If you look at those, you'll see that we have already the presence of God's Holy Spirit in our lives and in our hearts.

The Spirit who is shaping us by God's grace for glory. He's the confirming Spirit, we might say. That's what verse 5 is all about, you see.

[11:07] He shows us that God's love is real, and that God's love has been poured into our hearts to make the death of Jesus real for my sins.

God's love, he says, poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. He confirms to me that what Christ has done really is for me and for you.

That's what happens when you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit comes into your heart and assures you that yes, it's true for you. He's the confirming Spirit.

He's also, Paul says here, what we might call the conforming Spirit. He's shaping us in love, Paul says, to conform us into the image of God the Son, our Lord Jesus.

That's what verses 3 and 4 are all about there. God's Spirit, he says, is in control even of all of our sufferings. And he's working through them to produce in us character and hope that will never shame us because one day we also will be made like the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

[12:16] That is our hope. And all of this we have already, says verse 1, because we have been justified by faith. Because Jesus' death has made our salvation certain.

But there's more. There's much more than this, Paul says here. In fact, what he tells us is the best is yet to be. Not only do we stand already in God's grace now, not only do we stand in the peace of God the Father, and not only are we being shaped now by grace for God's glory, by the presence in our lives of God the Spirit, but we shall certainly share in the glory to come, he says, in the perfection of God the Son, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus' resurrection promises to make our salvation complete. Our full salvation is not yet in our possession. That's what he's saying.

It's guaranteed. Every bit as certain as all that we've already received because it's all the gift of God's grace received into our hands. God has done it and promised it.

It's certain. In fact, the essential thrust of this whole passage here in Romans 5 is all about the certainty of a future hope.

[13:40] The great expectation, the greater expectation that we all have as Christian people that our salvation will at last be complete and that we will be as the Lord Jesus is, raised in a body of glory.

Well, do pick up your Bibles again and let's turn back to Romans chapter 5. Do you see that that hymn we were singing tells us that we have a great expectation that Jesus' resurrection will make our salvation complete?

And that's what Paul is speaking about here in Romans chapter 5. Look at verse 2 again. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

What is that glory that we hope for? Well, it's the permanent salvation that God has promised. It's the fullness of eternal life that still lies in the future for us.

That's what God promised Abraham way, way back at the beginning. Remember? Look back at chapter 4, verse 13 again that we read. It takes us all the way back to the book of Genesis that we're studying on Sunday mornings normally.

[14:59] God promised to Abraham and to his heirs, to his offspring, that they would be heirs of the world, of the cosmos, the whole universe.

Not just a little bit of land that they camped in, the strip that was known as Israel, but the whole world. That was what Abraham hoped for. That was what Abraham was looking forward to.

That was what God had promised him. And the New Testament tells us that plainly. Tells us it here. Hebrews 11 is just as plain. He hoped, we're told, for a better country.

A better earthly country? No. A heavenly country. Not an earthly country. He reckoned, we're told there, that God could even raise the dead.

And so Abraham knew that he was just a stranger. He was just an exile in this world. But he knew also that God would be true to his promise.

[16:00] He knew that at last God would raise up his body and he would live with him. Not in an earthly city, but in a heavenly city whose architect and builder was God.

And that's what Abraham hoped for. And that also is what we hope for. Otherwise, otherwise, if this world is as good as it gets, well, our salvation is hardly worth it, is it?

Now you might think differently. Sometimes Christians say, of course it is. Being a Christian is so great. It's so good that even if in the end we prove to be wrong about everything we believed, even if it is just for this life, of course it's still worth it.

Well, you might think that, but that is not what the New Testament tells us. The New Testament is very plain that that is not so. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 that if we are wrong about the resurrection, then we are of all people to be pitied.

We're to be pitied by the whole world because we've made such a drastic mistake. But no, this is not it. This is not as good as it gets, even as Christian believers with access to our Heavenly Father. [17:18] Even being filled with God's Holy Spirit, even that isn't yet full salvation now. Certainly not as the New Testament speaks of salvation.

We need to understand that it's so, so important. If I were to ask you this morning how many people here, how many of you have been saved? Not sure what you'd say, but actually the New Testament would say to us, none of us, none of us have yet been saved.

Not yet. If you don't believe me, look at verse 9 of Romans chapter 5. Do you see what he says? We have now been justified by his blood.

Yes, absolutely, that's true. By the way, notice the language. In verse 1 we're told we're justified by faith, but here we're told we're justified by Jesus' blood.

What being justified by faith means is to receive by faith as a gift the justification that comes through the Lord Jesus Christ only by the averting of God's wrath through his blood as a redeeming sacrifice.

[18:29] That's what we were looking at on Friday. But verse 9 says we have been justified and therefore it can be assured that, do you see, we shall be saved future by him from the wrath of God.

That is, we'll be saved from the great judgment that is still to come. And look at verse 10 we shall be saved verse 10 in his life better to translate it there in, not by.

That is, in the risen everlasting life of the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall be saved. That is still future. You see, he's talking about the great day of wrath.

He's talking about the day of judgment, the wrath to come. But he's telling us that not only will that day of judgment not terrify us, but as verse 2 says, the thought of that day makes us rejoice, makes us celebrate confidently.

Why? Because we hope for glory on that day, not for wrath. We hope for the glory of God. And, you might say to me, well, you hope.

[19:39] Is that all? You hope? You hope it'll turn out glorious on that day and not terrible? You hope that you'll be saved from God's judgment? What's so special about that?

Isn't that what every religion hopes for? Isn't that what everybody says? I'll do my best and I hope that on that day, if there is a day of judgment, I hope that God will accept me on that day. Isn't that what all religions hope for?

Oh yes, that is. That is what mere religion hopes for. That's the best that it can say. But you see, Christian hope is not that kind of hope, not at all that kind of hope.

Totally, totally different. Christian hope, as the Bible understands it, is a certainty. It's an expectation that is sure and utterly, utterly certain.

And it will never be put to shame, as verse 5 says. We will never, ever be proved wrong to have believed that in hope. We find that hard because our use of that word is so different.

[20:43] If I say to you, well, I hope Scotland will win at Murrayfield, then that is the opposite of biblical hope. The absolute opposite because very often that hope, nearly always that hope, is put to shame and completely put to shame this year.

Is it not so? We hope Scotland might win somewhere, but they didn't win anywhere. But if I say to you, if I say to you, I am so tired, but I'm clinging on in hope for my holiday next week, well, that is quite, quite different, isn't it?

Because my holiday will surely come. And indeed, my bag is packed, the tank is full, and I hope to be on my way very soon. And that is biblical hope.

That is the great expectation that the Bible gives us. It's the coming day of the Lord that will vindicate us as having been absolutely right to wait for a certain fulfillment of everything that God has promised.

That is hope. And our hope, our certain hope, is for a complete salvation, for a permanent salvation, which means not the wrath of God and eternal death, but as verse 10 says, saved in his life, in the life of God's Son, in his risen life that is alive forever and ever.

[22 : 10] Romans chapter 1 begins by telling us that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead.

That is, he was declared to be the true and heavenly man. The human being as human beings were meant to be, were destined to be.

And Romans 4.25, as we've seen, tells us, just look there, he was raised for our justification. And so at last, we also will be saved in his life.

We also will be declared to be sons and daughters of God in power because of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. You see, salvation is all about life.

Life in all its fullness. Life that is eternal. Life that is still to come, but is still certain to us through God's grace in Jesus Christ.

[23 : 12] Turn down to Romans chapter 6, verse 23. Makes it so clear to us, doesn't it? Romans 6.23, For the wages of sin, that is the wages that we deserve from our old master, from the power of sin, the wages of sin is death.

But the free gift of God, the gift of God's sheer grace to us, is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. We shall be saved in his life.

That is our great expectation. Paul says in Romans 13 later on that that salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

Every day our real salvation, our complete salvation draws nearer. And that means that the passing calendar, the passing calendar doesn't strike dread into our hearts when we're Christian people.

The passing calendar should strike joy into our hearts because bodily decay that we all experience, it's just a passing phase. It's not the end. It's painful.

[24 : 20] It's painful for us. It's very painful for our loved ones when we see them. But it's passing. But we are going to share in that glory to come that is forever, that is permanent.

We are going to share in the bodily perfection of our risen Lord Jesus Christ when he comes in glory. We shall be saved in his life. But can I be really sure of that?

That's a very important question, isn't it? It's a very important question as you get older and frailer and as the calendar does seem to be passing faster and faster.

Can I really be sure? Well, Paul says, yes, you can be sure. Just as sure as you stand in grace already. In fact, he says, much more sure.

You see that he says that twice in verses 9 and 10? Much more. Look at verse 9. If we've been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

[25 : 31] Verse 10. If while we were enemies, we were reconciled by the death of his son, much more shall we be saved in his life. See what he's saying?

God has already done the extraordinary thing. God has already done the unthinkable thing in coming in the person of his own son to die in our place, to bear our punishment.

To die for whom? Verse 6. For the weak, he says. For the ungodly. To die, verse 7, for sinners.

Verse 10. To die for enemies. He has done all this. How then, how then can God fail to bring his friends, those he's already at peace with, those he's already reconciled with and rejoicing with, how can he fail to bring those friends to glory?

It's not just his power and his love that will do this. His justice demands that he do it. Because his wrath has already fallen in the person of his son for our sins.

[26 : 40] His wrath has already fallen on the Passover lamb. And therefore, his wrath cannot ever threaten again those who are his by faith through that propitiation that is in Jesus' blood.

That's why the Apostle John in his letter says the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin and God is faithful and just to forgive our sins.

He must forgive the sins of those his son has died for. Because his justice demands that that sin cannot be punished all over again. And so because we are forgiven already, much more, he says, will we be saved in his life.

Much more will our salvation be completed in resurrection. Well, as we draw to our close, just turn over a page again to Romans chapter 8.

Because it's in that wonderful chapter, isn't it, that we see so clearly that everything that we long for still, everything that we hope for, with great certainty is real.

[27 : 53] The life that there is in all its everlasting fullness. Look at Romans 8 and verse 11. If the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you.

resurrection life to these mortal bodies of ours, just like Jesus' risen body.

Isn't that a great expectation as you feel your body getting older and frailer and feebler? Isn't that a great expectation this Easter day? And look at verse 18.

For I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

A glorious bodily life, but in a gloriously remade world, replacing all the sufferings of this present time. That is complete salvation.

[29 : 12] We've only tasted it so far. By the way, he's not talking here, is he? About floating around in some disembodied state, sitting on clouds and playing harps as though we were sort of wisps or ghosts or something like that.

That's what some people think Christians are talking about when we talk about heaven. Some Christians themselves are pretty confused about what they're talking about when they talk about heaven. But look how solid this is.

It's so solid and tangible and real. No, no, no. The Bible is not talking at all about something less, something that's a shadow of this present life, but much, much more than we've ever experienced in this present life.

The Bible is not telling us that we will go somewhere to some home of the dead and remain like that forever. The Bible tells us that the heaven, the new heavens and the new earth, the kingdom of God will come at last to us when Jesus comes to reign.

And the whole of this earth is going to be transformed and glorified along with our bodies as we are transformed and glorified. Look at verse 20.

[30 : 26] The creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. That's our hope, you see, and the hope of the whole creation.

No more groaning world. An end at last to all this world's suffering, to all this world's pain. No more devastating earthquakes, no more tsunamis, no more floods or pestilence or disease or decay or danger or any of these things that blight our world.

Because there will be no more sinful bodies of human beings. Look at verse 23. Not only the creation, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirits, that's believers, we groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies, our bodies at last redeemed, resurrected, and therefore an end forever, an end forever, these terrible sinful natures of ours, will at last be delivered, Paul says, from these bodies of death, as he calls them.

Bodies that make us so wretched and make the world so wretched just because through them our sinful natures still dog us and still drag us down, even though we're reconciled to God through Jesus.

[32 : 16] We know that's true, don't we? Even though we're being renewed day by day by his spirit, we still drag down as long as we're in these bodies.

We still groan, says Paul, we eagerly wait for our full salvation, for the redemption, the resurrection of our bodies, our adoption as sons. Don't you find yourself often groaning as a Christian?

Because of the struggles of life? Because of this still suffering world? Because of the struggles of faith that you have constantly in this still, alas, far too sinful body and mind?

Well, the day when groaning ceases, will come, says Paul. The day of great liberation, the day of the redemption of our bodies, and the day of release from bondage of this whole universe.

to become what God has destined it to be. It's nearer today than the day we first believed. The complete salvation that our Lord's resurrection promises to all who believe.

[33 : 28] It's nearer today than it was yesterday. It's not yet, but it is sure, and it is certain. Much more sure and certain than anything else ever could be, because it's guaranteed by the grace of God.

He has already justified us by the blood of his Son. Much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. Much more shall we be saved in his life.

It's the resurrection of Jesus that makes our salvation complete. That's why the resurrection matters. And that's why for us who are an Easter people, our song truly is hallelujah on this Easter day and indeed on every day, because Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.

Well, let's pray together. Lord, how we thank you for our risen Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, glorified and exalted at your right hand from whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. But how we thank you that we who through Christ have received your great grace, we look for that day not with dread, but with joy. And we long for our full salvation.

[35 : 06] So, Lord, fill our hearts. This day with hope and on our lips put a great song of hallelujah through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.