

A Complete Salvation: Truly Alive with God

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[0 : 0 0] And we're going to turn now to our Bible reading for this evening. And Willie is concluding his series through these early verses of Romans chapter 5.! So please turn your Bible to Romans.

And if you don't have a Bible with you, we have plenty of visitor Bibles at the side at the back, so please do grab one. And find Romans chapter 5, page 942.

And once you're there, just turn back one page to chapter 3. I'm going to read a couple of verses from Romans chapter 3 before we read chapter 5. So Romans 3, first of all.

Romans 3 and verse 20. For by works of the law, no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

But now, the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and prophets bear witness to it. The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

[1 : 1 2] For there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood.

Now turn over the page to Romans 5, beginning verse 1. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through him, we have also 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 suffering produces 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. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die.

[2 : 3 4] But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, 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 by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Amen. May God bless to us his word this evening. Well, good evening.

And do turn with me, if you would, to Romans chapter 5. And we're coming to this last in our short series on these first 11 verses of this chapter.

and we've been looking at these guaranteed fruits that flow from Christ our Savior's great grace to us from the cross of Christ the wonderful guarantees that belong to every believer in Christ just because our righteousness from God our justification as first one puts it is by faith and of course what that means is by faith in the gift of God's grace to us in Christ and that alone in other words it's a sovereign work of God that is for us and it is given to us and nothing at all of our own all we do is we receive it it's nothing to do with our human works nothing to do with our human worthiness nothing even to do with our human worship but all all from God and that is why the Christian faith is different from all human religion all human religion is trying to do what the Led Zeppelin song was all about building or finding a stairway from earth up to heaven through the right worship of of God or the gods or or whatever it might be winding a path for us to heaven but the Christian gospel turns that whole idea of human religion absolutely upside down because God has made himself a stairway from heaven to earth he came down to earth from heaven we sing in the Christmas carol and through his own atoning death on the cross for our sins already he has won a path for us to heaven's glory and only because of that can we begin to worship God at all so yes sometimes people say well all religion is just the same and in a sense that is absolutely true because all human religion is just a different version of that same thing winning your way to God winning your way to heaven but you see what many people who say that have never come to understand perhaps because they've never been told properly may have even been going to church all their life and never been told properly but what they've never grasped is that the Christian faith is in total contrast to all religion all human religion it's not about religion in that sense at all it's all about faith and not faith either as often people seem to think of faith as a faith for somehow trying to believe in something that isn't really true faith in the Bible again is the absolute opposite of that faith in the Bible is a solid trust in something that God has already objectively done to win salvation for human beings it's a trust in something that God has done and God has guaranteed to be sure to be certain because he has done it and all who believe and trust in that work can be sure that they receive that from him when you when you go into a shop you hand over your credit card don't you well I'd never use cash these days but when you go into a shop

[7 : 01] I hand over my credit card that is the guarantee to the shopkeeper that the goods that they're giving to me are going to be paid for have I gone to shop the the the person behind the till might take one look at me and think I'm not really sure you're good for that money you don't look to me as though you have got much money but that doesn't matter does it because it doesn't depend on what I look like it doesn't depend on my dependability it depends on the logo that says visa or mastercard or whatever it is on the front of that card because that card tells the shopkeeper that the might of international visa is behind that payment and that gives him the confidence to hand me over the goods and let me walk away with them he knows that he will be paid so that even if I'm personally bust actually it's not the shopkeeper's problem he will get his money from the credit card company not because of trust in me but because of trust in the logo of visa and so on well it's God's guarantee you see it is the guarantee of the sovereign creator and lord of the universe it's his guarantee that stands behind our salvation because he's already accomplished it in Jesus Christ this on the price has already been paid in fact and so all the the wonderful fruits of that saving grace are guaranteed to us just because it's all by his grace all through his mercy and not at all through our performance or our cooperation or anything else at all in all the world so let's just remind ourselves of these wonderful fruits again of Christ our Savior's grace that are guaranteed because they come from a sovereign God himself first of all we have a certain status with God our personal righteousness is guaranteed because we are righteous through our great Savior alone through grace alone not at all because of our pedigree or even our performance verse one we have peace with God through not us but through the Lord Jesus Christ now because we've made peace with God not because we've reconciled ourselves to God not at all look at verse 11 because we have received received that reconciliation all from him and so we're justified we are right with God we have a certain status with him and that means as verse 2 tells us that we have a continuous access to God we have a continuing standing with God our personal relationship with God is guaranteed because we are reconciled permanently by our great Savior alone by his grace by his faithfulness not by our faithfulness not by our fruitfulness and so nothing can ever stop our access to God nothing can stop us coming to our heavenly father in prayer verse 2 through him we have gained access into this grace and we stand there in it permanently forever at peace with God our heavenly father and we have a wonderful ongoing assurance that is guaranteed because we have the confirming spirit of

[illegible]

that's what abraham hoped for that's what god promised him and he looked for it with certainty not merely not merely an earthly promised land people can get very confused about that and think that that was all that people were hoping for in the old testament not so hebrews 11 is absolutely plain isn't it tells us very clearly abraham hoped for a better country that is a heavenly one not an earthly one for life from the dead he reckoned that god could raise the dead and so he knew that he was a stranger he was an exile here on the earth but he knew that god would be true to his promise and that he would bring him at last to life in an everlasting city built by god himself and to live with god himself in his presence forever that is what abraham hoped for to be heir of the world and that is our hope as well otherwise if this world is as good as it gets well our salvation is hardly worth it is it well you might say well yes it is being a christian is so great it's so fulfilling it's such a blessing to be part of the family of god's church even if even if that's all it was then life would still be worth it as a christian i've heard christians actually say that sort of thing but friends that is not what the bible says in fact if you read what paul says in first corinthians 15 he says very plainly if we are wrong about the resurrection from the dead we are indeed a pitiful bunch we are to be pitied more than all people he says that's the key thing this is not as good as it gets one of my favorite films is the film with that name that stars jack nicholson i'm sure many of you have seen it he's a man with all kinds of psychological hang-ups and there's a point in the film where he's having a major crisis and he goes to see his counselor his psychiatrist and he's waiting in the waiting room among all these other people who are suffering just like him and he cries out in despair maybe is this as good as it gets and sometimes we feel like that don't we as christians this is as good as it gets sometimes i think in in our heart of hearts as christians we may think like that that our our real expectation from the gospel shrinks so much and it just becomes some kind of personal tonic or a sort of crutch to help us help us through this life our horizon can shrink to become so so small no says the gospel no says paul this is not as good as it gets in fact what we have already all these these wonderful things these wonderful fruits of god's grace that we have as justified believers to be filled with the spirit to have access to god to be rejoicing in god none of these things according to paul actually actually are really yet salvation at all at least not in the way the new testament understands it that's something so important for us to grasp see if i if i were to ask all of you here put your hands up if you've been saved i suspect lots of us would put our hands up wouldn't we but according to paul here in romans chapter 5 and in fact according to all the new testament writers none of us who are christian believers have yet been saved not yet and certainly not fully look at verse 9 we have now yes being justified by his blood past tense that's true by the way look at look at the language there in verse 1 we're told we're justified by faith but clearly what that means is that we have received by faith the justification that comes only through the propitiation that is in his blood as we read there in romans 3 we have been justified by his blood

at the cross yes and therefore he says we can be assured that we will be saved by him from the wrath of god that is saved from the wrath of god on the day of judgment that is still to come in the future okay verse 10 and we shall be saved in i think is a better way of putting it than by saved in his life that is in the risen everlasting life of jesus christ our lord but that's still future you see he's talking about that great day of wrath the day of of judgment that the bible often talks about the wrath to come and that is a day that will certainly come but now now now that day coming doesn't terrify us in fact as verse 2 says the very thought of that day makes us rejoice makes us celebrate confidently because we are hoping for glory on that day not for wrath but you might say well you're hoping for that is that all you hope it'll turn out well on that great and glorious day but that's what everyone hopes isn't it there are many many people say well i'll i'll do my best i'll live a good life and hopefully hopefully in the judgment god will accept me isn't that what all religions say and hope well yes that is what all mere religion says and sometimes i'm afraid confused christianity or christian sounding religion is just that kind of religion but friends real christian hope that paul is speaking about here is quite quite different it is a certain hope it is a guaranteed certainty it's our expectation that is sure that is secure that is certain and as verse 5 says here will not put us to shame it will never prove us wrong to have believed that it will never disappoint that's biblical hope and it's so different from the way we use that word if i say to you i hope scotland will win in the next match at murray field that is not biblical hope that is a hope that is very often put to shame i'm afraid to say i know it i've experienced it many times but if i say on a monday morning gosh i am really exhausted i'm just clinging on in hope for friday to come and friday evening and a chance to relax and put my feet up well that's quite different isn't it because friday night will certainly come friday night has always come and friday night will always come whatever shape i'm in even though on monday morning it can seem that maybe friday night never will come but that is biblical hope it is the coming of a sure and certain day the day that will vindicate us as having been absolutely right to wait patiently for that fulfillment of god's sure and certain promise that is hope according to the bible and our hope is for a complete salvation that is a permanent salvation which means not the wrath of god and eternal death but as verse 11 or verse 10 here says being saved in his life in the life of god's son we shall one day share in his risen life forever the one who can never die again romans begins in chapter 1 verse 4 by saying jesus was was declared he was appointed to be the son of god with power by his resurrection from the dead that is he was declared to be the true

the holy heavenly man as god had destined humanity to be from the very beginning adam was created to be god's son read the genealogy and in luke's gospel chapter 4 it goes all the way back to adam the son of god but adam rebelled didn't he became weak he became ungodly he became a sinner an enemy of god god and the result was as romans 5 verse 12 here says that through him and through his sin death came into the world of human beings but if you look down to verse 14 there you'll see it tells us that adam was a type that is he was a foreshadow of one who was to come a second man the last adam as paul calls him in first corinthians 15 not the life destroyer but a life giver and paul says therefore as by a man came death by man also came the resurrection from the dead for as in adam all die so also in christ shall all be made alive all who believe and trust in him look at that last verse of chapter 4 of romans there romans 4 verse 25 jesus was raised for our justification and so at last says verse 10 we shall be saved in his life in his resurrection life we shall share in his life in a resurrection that is eternal salvation is all about life it's about life eternal it's about life that is still to come but which is guaranteed which is certain through the gift of god's grace to us in christ if you look down to chapter 6 verse 23 you'll see the famous verse there that says for the wages of sin that is the the payment that we deserve from the old master of our lives the power of sin the wages of sin is death and he means eternal death separation from god but the gift of god the free gift of god the gift of his grace alone is eternal life in christ jesus our lord we will be saved in his life life that will never end and that is our great expectation nothing less than that is true salvation it's not yet our possession but as paul says later on in romans 13 our salvation is nearer today than when we first believed every day that real salvation is drawing closer and that means that the the passing calendar for the christian doesn't strike dread into our hearts or it oughtn't to but joy because bodily decay is but a passing phase it's painful but it's passing and we are going to share in that glory that is to come the sharing of bodily perfection in life through the risen lord jesus and every day we're we're drawing nearer and nearer to that permanent home to that true life paul says to the philippines remember in chapter 3 our citizenship is in heaven and from there we await a savior the lord jesus who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself you see when he comes again at last in glory we will be saved in his life that is our christian hope in jesus

[26 : 44] but you might be asking yourself can we really be sure of that can we it's a very important question isn't it especially if you're growing older as we all are conscious of your frailty if you're looking in the mirror more and more and finding yourself singing the hymn change and decay is all around i see you're reaching that age when you really do realize you look a lot better with your clothes on and your clothes off we have to thank god for clothes that cover a multitude of skin don't we but seriously it's not easy is it as you grow older as as you grow frail especially if you're conscious that that is very real in your own life or in that of your loved ones if you're facing failing health you know that you're drawing closer to the end of your life it's hard isn't it to face death with a steady eye whether it's your own death or or it's the death of loved ones death is the enemy it's the last enemy paul the apostle says that and fear of death is is a power isn't it that the devil uses the enemy paul the apostle says that the enemy is the enemy of the enemy of the enemy of the enemy and when death's dark shadow is is encroaching on your life maybe in the form of a a recent diagnosis or maybe an established illness that you know is terminal whether it's for you whether it's for a loved one in the lord it's such a question is that can we be sure can we be sure of our full salvation in his risen everlasting life well friends the gospel tells again and again and again and again yes we can yes we can emphatically certainly unquestionably as sure as it's true that already we stand in grace in fact more sure much more sure that's what paul says here look at verse 9 if we have been already justified by his blood much more much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of god much more you see verse 10 if while we were enemies we were reconciled by the death of his son much more not much less much more shall we be saved in his life you see god has already done the extraordinary thing the apparently impossible thing the unthinkable thing he sent his son to die for well for who remember verse 6 for the weak who could not cooperate with him for the ungodly who would not cooperate with him verse 7 for sinners who deserve nothing verse 10 for enemies who were opposed to him who fought against god's mercy so he's done all of that how then now can he possibly fail to bring those who are his friends those who are already at peace with him those who are already reconciled to him who are rejoicing with him who are being renewed by his own spirit within their hearts how can he possibly fail to bring us to glory along with christ to bring us to that full salvation how can his power which has already overcome all the sin all the rebellion all the evil how can it possibly fail to bring to completion what's already been guaranteed it can't possibly fail but it's not just his power and his love that will do this it's his justice that demands it because his wrath and judgment has already fallen on our sin in the person of christ the son

he is the passover lamb the judgment has come to this household and therefore his wrath cannot ever ever threaten again his beloved ones who are his through faith through the redemption that is in his blood jesus has paid it all he's paid it completely he's paid it forever that's why john the apostle can say in his letter the blood of jesus cleanses from all sin and he goes on to say god is faithful and just to forgive our sins he must save us for life on the day of judgment his justice demands that sin cannot be punished all over again when it already has been paid for in the blood of the lamb and so because we are forgiven already much more much more shall we be saved in his life that's our full salvation that's our certain hope as the hymn says full salvation full salvation raised in christ to life divine we shall be saved we shall be saved fully and at last forever in his life you sang it in those words of the hymn from samuel rutherford's words the streams on earth i've tasted more deep i'll drink above there to an ocean fullness his mercy will expand with glory glory dwelling in emmanuel's land you see he's saying here we've we've tasted so much already haven't we but there's more there's so much more to come i was at a wedding yesterday we had wonderful canapes being brought round before we had the main meal wonderful canapes almost so wonderful that i thought i don't really need a meal but my goodness when i saw the spread of the meal my mind changed the best was certainly yet to be well friends this life is just a taste it's the canapes much more much more to come turn with me as we close to romans chapter 8 because again there we see so clearly don't we this full salvation that we long for that we hope for with certainty look at chapter 8 verse 11 it's the spirit of him who raised jesus from the dead dwells in you he who raised christ jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through the spirit who dwells in you see that and nothing less than that is salvation life to our mortal bodies like jesus resurrection body look at verse 18 for i consider the sufferings of the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed not to us but in us for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of god a glorious bodily life in a glorious remade world that's our salvation when we are revealed like jesus as sons of god with power by our resurrection when we are shown to be men and women made new forever that and nothing less is what the bible means by salvation when just as we've borne the image of the man of dust adam so shall we bear the image of the man of heavens as paul to the corinthians jesus only then is salvation complete only then we are at last truly alive not not floating around us disembodied spirits in heaven in the air playing harps of foolish nonsense like that so many people are completely and utterly confused about what they think the christian doctrine of heaven is all about it's not that at all it's not

even right to say that our goal is that one day we should reach heaven what the bible says is that at the last when jesus comes again heaven will come down to us this whole world will be recreated the whole creation will be glorified along with the glory of god's people it's not heaven that's some kind of shadow world c.s lewis was so right about that these are the shadow lands the reality is still ahead of us this is the world in bondage to decay under the curse of sin one day that will be no more look at verse 20 of romans 8 the creation was subjected to futility not willingly but because of him who subjected it in hope certain 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 the hope for the whole creation no more groaning world an end at last to all this world's pain suffering and suffering and death no more devastating earthquakes and tsunamis and other things no more deadly pestilence no more disease no more strokes and cancer and dementia and all the things that so rob us of our humanity no more decay no more danger no more no more groaning world why because verse 23 because no longer do we have groaning bodies of sin do you see not only the creation but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirits grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons what does that mean the redemption of our bodies new bodies everlasting bodies resurrection bodies like jesus sharing in his life and end at last to all human sin and therefore an end to all the sickness and the sorrow and the suffering that sin brings into this world at last we'll be delivered saved from these bodies of death that paul says in romans chapter 7 make us so wretched because our sinful nature still drags us down so dogs us even though we are reconciled to god and even though we're being renewed by the spirit of god we still groan don't we we eagerly wait for that full salvation for redemption for redemption for the resurrection of our bodies don't you find yourself groaning quite often as a christian because of the struggles of life in this world full of suffering still and also because of the struggles in faith and a body that's still so ground down by sin don't you long for an end to all of that an end to tears to grief an end to the pain of illness weakness perhaps more than anything else an end to the shame of all our sins and our failures we long for that don't we and paul says that day shall come surely certainly because we believe in the forgiveness of sins that has already brought us peace with god then much more much more we know for certain that that day comes the day of resurrection and everlasting life i can never recite the the end of the apostles creed without a sense of a thrill rising in my heart

as we say these words they come to a great crescendo don't they i believe in the holy spirit in the holy catholic church in the communion of saints in the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the body and in the life everlasting we shall have complete salvation not yet but it's sure it's certain because it is the guaranteed fruit not of our doing not in any part but guaranteed because of the great grace of our great savior c.s lewis had a wonderful way with words he put it this way once in a letter to somebody he said think of yourself just as a seed patiently wintering in the earth waiting to come up as a flower in the garden as good time up into the real world the real waking i suppose that the whole present life look back on from there will seem only like a drowsy half waking we're here in the land of dreams but cock crow is coming and it's nearer now than when i began writing this letter that's right says paul that's right we await eagerly yes with groaning but eagerly our full salvation the redemption of our bodies but our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed and it's the guaranteed fruit of our savior's grace verse 9 since we have now been justified by his blood much more shall we be saved from in him from the wrath of god since we are now reconciled much more shall we be saved in his life well hallelujah this is the gospel of our lord jesus christ let's pray the joy of resurrection all sin and sorrow past to see the face of jesus to be like him at last made perfect in his image complete in christ the son in resurrection glory we'll share the life he won lord this is our hope sure and certain because it rests in no part upon us but upon you and not upon what you will do but what you have done once and for all and forever through the cross of our lord jesus christ so lord fill us we pray with this wonderful hope and may that hope lead us in lives of joyful service until that day for christ's sake amen