

Loving Jesus, Being Perfected in Our Faith until He Returns

“...the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,”

(1 Peter 1:7-8)

Waiting, Watching, and Praying

Watch! For the morning is breaking,
A moment and He will be here!
The mists and the shadows are fleeing,
The darkness will soon disappear;
And He, for who ages have waited,
The Lord Who has tarried so long,
Will come in an out-burst of glory
A moment, and we shall be gone.

Watch! For the morning is breaking,
A moment, the crown will be won!
A moment, and we shall be with Him,
A moment, the journey is done!
Lord, keep us each moment unsleeping,
And count us all worthy to be
In that noble band of Thy watchers,
Whose life is a vigil with Thee.

(Margaret E. Barber, Hymns 957)

Prayer Burdens

1. The positive ongoing of the whole church here as we seek together to press forward to the Christ that is before.
2. The Thankfulness dinner being provided by the Toronto young people for their parents on Saturday evening, Mar 24 at Hall 3. Please pray for the mutual encouragement of the young people and their parents at that time.
3. The GLA Chinese-speaking Easter Weekend conference to be held in Cleveland on April 6th to 8th.

Announcements:

General

1. **Donation Receipt Request Forms Available**
The Donation Receipt Request Forms can be picked up at your respective Service Office or from your district leader. Refer to News and Fellowship on this site to see how to process the form (if you have questions).
2. **YPs Dinner of Thankfulness**
The YPs Dinner of Thankfulness is this coming Saturday, Mar. 24th at Hall 3. Please inform the district serving ones if you plan to attend.

The church in Toronto

Philippians Week 17

Mar 19 - Mar 31, 2007

Pursuing Christ to Gain Him (4) —Awaiting Christ for the Transfiguration of the Body

Weekly Bible Reading:

Philippians 3:17-21

Hymns:

949; 950; 966; 961

Monday

Verses for Morning Revival

Philippians 3:17-19

- 17 Be imitators together of me, brothers, and observe those who thus walk even as you have us as a pattern.
- 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ,
- 19 Whose end is destruction, whose god is their stomach, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

Readings for Inspiration and Truth

Dealing with the Physical Body and Its Enjoyment

“After dealing with the soul in 3:1-16, Paul goes on to deal with the body in 3:17-21. These five verses deal with physical enjoyment, especially as practiced by the Epicureans. As genuine seekers of Christ, we need surgery to eliminate our religious and philosophical thoughts, and we also need a proper dealing with the physical body. In verse 19 Paul speaks of those ‘whose God is the belly,’ but in verses 20 and 21 he says that we are awaiting the Lord Jesus Christ, ‘Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, conforming it to the body of His glory.’ In these verses Paul deals with the physical body and its enjoyment. We should not think that Paul deals only with the soul and leaves the body free to indulge itself in its lusts. In dealing with the soul, Paul does not touch physical things. But in dealing with the body, he does touch these things.”

“...in verse 17, ‘Be imitators together of me, brothers, and observe attentively those who thus walk as you have us for an example.’ The example here does not refer to what Paul has covered in the foregoing verses. Instead, it is the example set by those who deal with the physical body in a proper way. How do we know that verse 17 refers not to the things of the soul, but to the things of the body? We know it by the fact that verse 18 begins with the word ‘for,’ indicating that this verse is an explanation of verse 17. Verse 18 says, ‘For many walk, of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping,

that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.' They were enemies of the cross of Christ, which has terminated the indulgence of the lusts of the physical body.

"As we have pointed out, the Epicureans care for indulgence in the enjoyment of eating and drinking. Paul refers to this in verse 19, which says, 'Whose end is destruction, whose God is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.' These are those who worship their belly and serve their stomach; their belly was their god. In promoting the enjoyment of eating and drinking, the Epicureans were more concerned with physical indulgence than with ethics or morality. Today many take the way of the Epicureans to indulge in physical enjoyments. On the weekends some are so given to sports and physical pleasures that they forget everything else. Of the Epicureans Paul also says that they 'set their minds on earthly things.' By earthly things he means physical things, material things, matters of eating and drinking.

"According to the book of Colossians, Paul did not agree with asceticism, with the practice of treating the body severely. But neither would he agree with the Epicurean indulgence in physical enjoyment. We need such things as food and clothing. Without them, we cannot live. However, we should not indulge ourselves in these things.

"In 4:11 Paul says, 'I have learned in whatever circumstances I am to be content.' The Greek word rendered content is a Stoic term, indicating a practice opposite to that of the Epicureans. The Stoics taught that a person should be content in all circumstances, caring neither for enjoyment nor for suffering. Paul used this expression in testifying that he had learned the secret to be content. In principle, we Christians agree neither with the Epicureans nor with the ascetics. In a sense, we may somewhat stand with the Stoics."

(Witness Lee, Life-study of Philippians, Msg. 25, pp. 210-212)

Tuesday

Verses for Morning Revival

Philippians 3:20

20 For our commonwealth exists in the heavens, from which also we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Colossians 3:2

2 Set your mind on the things which are above, not on the things which are on the earth.

Ephesians 2:4a-6

4 ...God...

5 ...made us alive together with Christ...

6 And raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,

reality of resurrection.

"Literally, 'in victory' is 'into victory.' Death means defeat to man. Through Christ's salvation in the resurrection life, death will be swallowed up into victory to us, the beneficiaries of Christ's resurrection life. In this verse victory is a synonym of resurrection. Resurrection is the victory of life over death.

(1) The Corruptible to Put On Incorruption

"When death in our entire being is swallowed up by Christ's resurrection life, the corruptible will put on incorruption. Life is the divine element, even God Himself, imparted into our spirit; incorruption is the consequence of life saturating our body (Rom. 8:11). At present we have a corruptible body. But when our body is transfigured at the time of the Lord's coming, our body will become incorruptible. In this way the corruptible will put on incorruption.

(2) The Mortal to Put On Immortality, That Is, Be Swallowed Up by the Resurrection Life

"Furthermore, when the death in the believers' being is swallowed up, the mortal will put on immortality, that is, will be swallowed up by the resurrection life. In 2 Corinthians 5:4 Paul says, 'We who are in the tabernacle groan, being burdened, in that we do not desire to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.' To be burdened here means to be weighed down, depressed, oppressed. The apostles groaned in the desire not to be unclothed, disembodied, that is, not to die but to be clothed upon, to put on the spiritual body. This is to have our body transfigured, to have it redeemed.

"In 2 Corinthians 5:4 'what is mortal' denotes our mortal body (2 Cor. 4:11; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:53). To have our mortal body 'swallowed up by life' is to have it transfigured by resurrection life swallowing up the death in our mortal body.

"Our fallen, mortal body is a great burden to us. Under the weight of this burden, we groan, not that we would be unclothed, or found naked, but that we would be clothed with a transfigured body. Like Paul, we should desire to have our body transfigured. When we are transfigured and clothed with the heavenly, spiritual, and resurrected body, then what is mortal will be swallowed up by life."

(Witness Lee, The Conclusion of the New Testament, Msg. 181, pp. 1963-1966)

Note: **Bold type** and/or underlining have been added for emphasis in the above verses and quotations.

Suggested Supplementary Reading

The Holy Word for Morning Revival—

Philippians: Week 5, Days 5-6

Crystallization-Study of the Epistle to the Philippians: Week 12 Days 1-3

54 And when this corruptible will put on incorruption and this mortal will put on immortality, then the word which is written will come to pass, "Death has been swallowed up unto victory."

Readings for Inspiration and Truth

A Further Word on the Transfiguration of Our Body

1. To Be "Like Him" — in Christ's Full Likeness

"In the way of His full salvation, God first regenerates us in our spirit that we may have Him within us as our life. Then He begins to transform us in our soul that He may fill, saturate, and possess our whole being. Thus, we may be transformed into His image to be His expression even while we are living on earth. Then, at His coming back, He will transfigure our body.

"Our spirit has been regenerated and our soul may be fully transformed, yet our body remains old. With all its physical weakness and illnesses, it is under the power of death. It is mortal and subject to infirmity and death. Though our body may be quickened by the Spirit who dwells in us (Rom. 8:11), yet it is a mortal body, subject to death and needing to be redeemed. Today, by cooperating with the Spirit in our spirit, we may experience the Lord's spreading of the divine life into our body to quicken and even to saturate it to a certain degree. Nevertheless, no matter how much our body may be quickened and even saturated by the Spirit, it still requires the Lord's full redemption. This is the reason we often groan within ourselves (Rom. 8:23). But we praise the Lord that when He comes back, He will transfigure the body of our humiliation. Then 'we shall be like Him' (1 John 3:2) not only in our spirit and in our soul but also in our body. At that time we shall be in His full likeness both inwardly and outwardly, from the center of our being to the circumference, from our innermost spirit to our outermost body. That will be the ultimate consummation of the Lord's salvation."

2. Death Will Be Swallowed Up by Resurrection Life in Victory

"For the believers to be redeemed in their body is also to have death in their entire being swallowed up by the resurrection life in victory. The time is coming when the last enemy, death, will not only be destroyed but also swallowed up by resurrection life.

"First Corinthians 15:54 says, 'Whenever this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, then shall come to pass the word which is written, Death has been swallowed up in victory.' The word 'whenever' refers to the time that our corrupted and mortal body will be resurrected or transfigured from corruption and death into glory and life. Then death will be swallowed up in the victory of resurrection life. This is the consummation of the resurrection we share in God's New Testament economy through redemption and salvation in Christ. This resurrection begins with the making alive of our dead spirit and is completed with the transfiguration of our corruptible body. In between is the process of the metabolic transformation of our fallen soul by the life-giving Spirit, who is the

Readings for Inspiration and Truth

Our Commonwealth (Citizenship) Exists in the Heavens

"In verse 20 Paul goes on to say, 'For our citizenship is in the heavens, from which also we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.' The Greek word rendered citizenship may also be rendered commonwealth or associations of life. Our national life is not in any earthly country; it is in the heavens. Our real citizenship, our true commonwealth, is in the heavens. Sometimes as I am traveling, people ask me where I come from. Although I may have to tell them that I come from China, I prefer to say that I come from the heavens and that my citizenship is in the heavens.

"Because our citizenship is in the heavens, we should not be occupied with earthly things, with the physical things needed for our existence. We should not place such a high value on material things. This does not mean, of course, that we should not have proper food, clothing, housing, and transportation. We definitely need these things. But anything that goes beyond need falls into the category of indulgence. Such indulgence is to be condemned. If we love the earthly things needed for human life, this is an indication that we do not treasure our heavenly citizenship. May we all remember that our citizenship is in the heavens and that we are a heavenly people sojourning on earth. If we have food, clothing, housing, and transportation to maintain life, we should be content. Let us not indulge ourselves in any earthly, material things."

(ibid., pp. 213-214)

Wednesday

Verses for Morning Revival

Philippians 3:20b

20 ...we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

1 Thessalonians 1:9-b10

9 ...you turned to God from the idols to serve a living and true God

10 And await His Son from the heavens, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath which is coming.

Readings for Inspiration and Truth

Eagerly Awaiting Our Savior – Standing Steadfastly in Faith

"To turn to God from the idols, to serve a living and true God, and to await His Son from the heavens are the three basic substances of the Christian life as viewed from another angle. To turn to God from the idols is to turn away not only from the false gods, together with the devil and the demons behind them, but also from all things other than God. This is accomplished by faith infused into the new converts through their hearing of the word of the gospel. To serve a living and true God is to serve the very God who is triune—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—who has been processed to be the believers' life and life supply for their enjoyment. They should experience Him not only as the

object of worship but also as the all-inclusive Supplier who lives in them. This experience is brought about by love produced within the believers by the sweet taste of the rich supply of the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit. To await the Son of God from the heavens is to look for the One who passed through incarnation, human living, and crucifixion and entered into resurrection and ascended to the heavens, and who will come back to receive His believers into glory. This is the hope that strengthens the believers to stand steadfastly in their faith.”

(NTRcV, 1 Thessalonians 1:92)

Ephesians 1:18-20

“...you may know...what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength, which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,”

Thursday

Verses for Morning Revival

Philippians 3:20b-21

20 ...the Lord Jesus Christ,

21 ...will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself.

Philippians 2:13

13 ...it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.

Readings for Inspiration and Truth

Romans 8:28-29

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;”

The Transfiguration of the Body

“From the heavens we are eagerly awaiting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who ‘will transfigure the body of our humiliation, conforming it to the body of His glory, according to the operation of Him Who is able even to subject all things to Himself.’ The transfiguration of our body will be the ultimate consummation of God’s salvation. In His salvation God first regenerated our spirit (John 3:6), now He is transforming our soul (Rom. 12:2), and, consummately, He will transfigure our body, making us the same as Christ in all three parts of our being.

“In verse 21 Paul refers to our body as ‘the body of our humiliation.’ This describes our natural body, made of worthless dust (Gen. 2:7) and damaged by sin, weakness, sickness, and death (Rom. 6:6; 7:24; 8:11). But one day this body will be transfigured and conformed to the body of Christ’s glory.

Christ’s body of glory is His resurrected body, saturated with God’s glory (Luke 24:26) and transcendent over corruption and death (Rom. 6:9).

“No matter how we may feed and clothe our body and no matter what kind of automobile we use to transport it or dwelling place to house it, it is still a body of humiliation. You may allow your body to rest on the best and most expensive bed, but it is nonetheless a body of humiliation. However, we should not hate or despise our body. If we despise our body, we shall practice asceticism. In a very real sense, we should love our body for the Lord’s sake. We need to care for the body without allowing it to indulge itself. One day, the Lord Jesus will come and transfigure the body of humiliation and conform it to the body of His glory.

“In verse 21 Paul says that the transfiguration of the body of humiliation is ‘according to the operation of Him Who is able even to subject all things to Himself.’ The transfiguration of our body is by the great power which subjects all things to the Lord (Eph. 1:19-22). This is the almighty power in the whole universe.

“I believe that now we can grasp Paul’s basic thought in Philippians 3. In this chapter Paul instructs us both concerning how to deal with the soul and how to deal with the body. To deal with the soul, we must count as loss all religious, philosophical, and cultural things so that Christ may occupy our entire being and that we may gain Him to the uttermost. To deal with our body, we should take care of our physical need, but not indulge in excessive physical enjoyment. Our aim should be to care for the body in a proper way that it may be healthy for the Lord’s expression. But our intention should not be to glorify the physical body through the over-enjoyment of physical things. Our body is not to be glorified in this way, but is to be glorified at the time of the Lord’s coming back. At that time, He will transfigure our body of humiliation. Thus, we are waiting for Christ to come back that we may be brought into the ultimate consummation of God’s salvation—the transfiguration of our body.”

(Life-study of Philippians, pp. 214-215)

Friday & Saturday

Verses for Morning Revival

1 John 3:2

2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been manifested what we will be. We know that if He is manifested, **we will be like Him** because we will see Him even as He is.

1 Corinthians 15:52-54

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and **we will be changed.**

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.