

*The Heart of the Gospel*  
**ROMANS**  
*The Goal Of Faith*

*Romans 4:1-15, August 20, 2017, Pastor Bill Russell*

🌀 Intro: The Testimony of Chuck Colson

How many remember Chuck Colson? He served as the special counsel for President Nixon from 1969-1973. He was a brilliant political strategist who was also known for his dirty political tricks, who even boasted that he would in his own words, **“walk over my own grandmother”** to ensure the reelection of President Richard M. Nixon. He was involved in the water gate scandal and eventually pleaded guilty to obstruction of Justice and spent 3 years in prison.

In the midst of this crisis, Mr. Colson said he underwent a profound religious transformation in August 1973, and that was at least in part why He pleaded guilty. He said it was a step that he depicted as a price he had to pay to complete the shedding of his old life and to be free to live the new.”

Mr. Colson went on to to have a very significant ministry for Christ and this is what He wrote many years later.

The great paradox [of my life] is that every time I walk into a prison and see the faces of men or women who have been transformed by the power of the living God, I realize that the thing God has chosen to use in my life ... is none of the successes, achievements, degrees, awards, honors, or cases I won before the Supreme Court. That's not what God's using in my life. What God is using in my life to touch the lives of literally thousands of other people is the fact that I was a convict and went to prison. That was my great defeat, the only thing in my life I didn't succeed in.

*Chuck Colson, Sermon "The Gravy Train Gospel," PreachingToday.com*

That of course is the gospel fully alive and at work not just in one man's life but in this world. At the heart of Mr. Colson's story is the very thing we see at the heart of the gospel. What is that? Humility. Humility is at the heart of the gospel and the life of anyone touched by the gospel.

In fact I want you to consider this with me this morning.

☪ **THE BIBLE:** I have here the Bible. (Hold it up!)

Now I have shared this many times before, but how we see the Bible is so very important. Most people see the Bible merely as a rule book or a manual for successful living. Sure the bible is full of wisdom, sound advice and practical truths that can shape how we live, but it is at its core so much more.

☪ I always emphasize that the Bible is first and foremost the **autobiography of Jesus Christ!** This is His story! From beginning to end this book seeks to exalt God the Father through Christ the Son!

The Bible though also has a very clear purpose, God wrote it for a very distant reason. That reason...

☪ To show us how we can have a **RIGHT RELATIONSHIP with God through Christ.**

God The Father wants a relationship with us, in fact that is why He created us, so we could exist in community with Him. We see this immediately in scripture, both our creation, 6 days in and our fellowship with God in the Garden on a daily basis.

We also see immediately how that relationship becomes damaged and the rest of the Bible is all about our relationship with God (along with the rest of His creation) being set right. The Bible tells us how we can have a right relationship with God through Christ.

Now there are two things that emerge from the pages of scripture that are essential for us to be in a right relationship with God. I am actually looking behind the obvious reality of our righteousness. We have to be holy and righteous to be in a relationship with God, but there are two other dynamics that must be present within our relationship.

## ☪ **TWO DYNAMICS FOR A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP:**

☪ We must be **HUMBLED!**

☪ God must be **EXALTED!**

Think about these dynamics in the original relationship between God and Satan moment.

Lucifer was God's most beautiful creation. Eventually Lucifer got to the point where he didn't think he needed God anymore. In fact he wanted to be God himself, he wanted to sit on God's very throne. The very moment his heart was filled with such pride was the very moment God kicked him out of heaven. Ezekiel actually gives us some of the details of the story. He actually writes about Satan's fall.

### **Ezekiel 28:17 ESV**

Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you.

One of the theories is that Satan and some other angels originally inhabited the earth and when Satan tried to ascend to heaven to take God's throne, God kicked Satan to earth which ravaged destruction on this world and that is where our story begins in Genesis 1 as God recreates the earth and places Adam and Eve in the Garden.

The important point is that God and Satan could not be in a right relationship when Satan was not humbled before God.

This is also what happened in the Garden of Eden. Man decided they did not need God anymore. Satan tempted them with the promise they could be LIKE GOD, knowing good and evil. They decided they wanted to be exalted so as to be Gods equal and that is what we call the great fall.

The thing is, for a healthy relationship man must be humbled under God. For God to be under anyone would destroy everything because you see, only God is Goodness and Glory or love and light at His very essence. Everything and everyone needs to be humbled under the Goodness and glory of God almighty!

### **TODAY'S BIG IDEA**

A right relationship between God and me requires that I be humbled before God and God be exalted over me. God achieves this through His Gospel and my faith. The goal of faith is to humble me and the end of my faith is the Glory of God!

Now as we head into chapter 4 of Romans we will pick up where left off. Last week we looked at the Gospel of humility and said that we are humbled by three things. Our **GUILT**, Our **RIGHTEOUSNESS** and our **FAITH**! In chapter 4 Paul is going to show us two ways that the our faith humbles us. We will look at one this week and the other one next week. Let's get right at it then... We read the text earlier but we will go through it and unpack it referring back to the passage at several points.

The first way faith humbles us them is this...

#### **#1. Faith accomplishes what we can't!**

We are humbled by the simple reality that our faith exposes our inadequacies and accomplishes for us what we can't accomplish for ourselves. Let's look then at exactly what it is that we are unable to accomplish for ourselves. There are at least three necessities that we will look at this morning that we can't do for ourselves, that we can't accomplish with out the intersection of our faith with the Gospel. Three ways in which our faith truly does humble us before God.

## **A. We can't SAVE ourselves.**

Now I get that this is a very basic point, but what I want to do is underscore this very important doctrinal truth. What Paul is going to do for us is walk us through what salvation really is and with great clarity explain why it is we cannot save ourselves.

### *Why we can't save ourselves...*

❏ I can't **JUSTIFY** myself. [V5]

Lets start with the word righteousness this morning.

I want us to consider this word righteousness this morning from three angles. We are of course made righteous in Christ and one angle of that righteousness is that it means we are Justified.

Look at verse 5 a moment.

#### **V.5**

And to the one who does not work  
but believes in him who justifies the ungodly,  
his faith is counted as righteousness,

 **Righteousness = Justification.**

The thing is I cannot justify myself. We saw this last week that the law shuts us up and we have no argument before God. I have no way of justifying my action and sin, none at all. I have no way to justify that I do not always put God first and love God most, He deserves nothing less. I also have no way to justify why I do not love other people at all times, in the exact same way that Christ loves me. I'm supposed to. I'm supposed to give away the love of Christ that has been given to me, its the least I can do. I can't justify not doing it and yet sometimes I don't!

So here is the thing about righteousness as Justification.  
Justification is both a LEGAL ACT and an AMAZING REALITY.

- **This is the legal act where my sins are not COUNTED against me.** Yes I have sinned, but God is not holding me accountable [v5] for those sins. We know from Genesis 3 and Roman 6 that the wages of sin is death, but by virtue of my faith in Christ, Jesus paid that wage for my sin and so I am no longer held accountable for it. It is a legal act or transaction.
- **It is also though, the amazing reality where it is just as if I have never sinned.** Yes I have sinned, but because of the faith I place in Christ and the His work in the Gospel, God deems me righteous or just as if I had never sinned. This is something I clearly cannot do for myself. To be honest we have a hard time forgetting the sins we have committed, letting alone believing that we have never sinned at all. We see ourselves as SINNERS, God sees us as SAINTS. That's the amazing reality of justification.

Here's a second reason I can't save myself...

❏ I can't **HUMBLE** myself and won't **EXALT** God. **[V2]**

Problem is, the Gospel requires Humility.

Look at verse 2 in a different, easier to read, translation...

### **V.2 NLT**

If his good deeds had made him acceptable to God, he would have had something to boast about. **But that was not God's way.**

You see God's way is the way of FAITH. Why Faith? In part because faith humbles us and for us to be in a right relationship with God we need to be humbled while He is exalted. That is exactly what the Gospel accomplishes on both ends. The Gospel humbles me in my sin and exalts Christ through the Cross. Here bis that verse in a paraphrase.

### **V. 2 J.B. Philipps Paraphrase**

Well, if justification were by achievement he could quite fairly be proud of what he achieved— but not, I am sure, proud before God.

The fact is no one can boast before God, but that doesn't stop us from boasting before each other. If salvation was in anyway by works and not mere faith, I'm sure we would boast amongst each other. We already do.

Another reason we can't earn our salvation...

❏ I can never **EARN** enough to pay my debt. **[V4]**

Verse 4 talks about the person who works and earns a wage. Now Paul is clear that we are not allowed to work because God is choosing the humility of simple faith over any grandiose work we may do. Still the Bible tells us that even if God would allow us to work for our salvation we would encounter another BIG problem. The fact that we simply could never earn enough money no matter how long or how hard we would work.

Jesus told a parable one time that illustrates this powerfully.

**Matthew 18:23-27**

"Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

Now the debt in this story is supposed to parallel or illustrate the debt that we owe God for our sin. There is more to this parable but I just gave us the first half of the story.

The key to understanding this parable is the debt, the amount of money that this man owed to the king. It is a very telling amount. It is hard to pin down an exact conversion number to today's standard but it would be somewhere between 3 million to 3 billion dollars, and yet that is not the most staggering way to define it. Listen to some commentary that puts it in perspective...

More significantly, 10,000 (a myriad) was the highest Greek numeral, and a talent the largest unit of currency,[1] so that 10,000 talents was the largest easily described debt (for comparison, the combined annual tribute of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea around this time was only 600 talents,[2] and one denarius was a day's wages,[2] so that 10,000 talents would be about 200,000 years' wages[3]).

<sup>^</sup> a b R. T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew: An introduction and commentary*, Eerdmans, 1985, ISBN 0802800637, p. 277.

<sup>^</sup> a b c d e f g Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, Eerdmans, 1999, ISBN 0802838219, pp. 456-461.

<sup>^</sup> 60,000,000 denarii divided by 6 days per week divided by 50 weeks = 200,000 years' wages.

The point of this debt appears to be 2 fold.

First it illustrates **MERCY** in the fact that this was such a huge a debt, the highest numerical amount of money. The point is no one would ever have lend that much money meaning it had to be stolen. The man received **mercy** though, by not being punished.

Second it illustrates **GRACE** as it is a debt that could never be repaid. He would have to work 200,000 years showing it is impossible to repay it and yet the man receives **grace** and is not forced to repay it.

You see even if God let us work to pay off our debt, we could never work hard enough or long enough. We simply owe too much and we cannot save ourselves.

We also can't save ourselves...

■ ■ Because the **PROMISE** precedes the **LAW**. [V 13]

#### ***Romans 4:13-14***

For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.  
14 For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void.



The order of events here is very telling. Understand that the PROMISE to Abraham came before the LAW of Moses. Why does that matter? Because God gave Abraham a promise based on the FAITH he demonstrated apart from any works. If God had given Abraham the LAW first and then the promise it would say that the promise was conditional upon the LAW, but it wasn't. Good thing at that because no man can ever fully keep the law.

But here's the thing, this parallels what we see in Genesis 3 after the first sin. In Genesis 3 this is the first time man is given the promise of the Messiah. The promise in the Garden is not conditional upon anything except as we see with Abraham, simple faith.

### **Now think about this...**

When Abraham was counted righteous because of his faith BEFORE any law or BEFORE he was even given even the PROMISE, what did Abraham have faith in?

You see it is not just that Abraham had faith in the direct promise God gave Him, he received that promise because he had already been counted righteous because of his faith. The question is, "His faith in what?" I would have to say it was His faith in God and in some way the original promise of a Messiah.

You see the order of events tell us that the blessing of the promise does not require a law. Now you might ask well why was a law ever given then? The law was likewise intended to humble man, because the law said three things...

#1. It pointed out our **SIN**:

*In case you aren't aware you are a SINNER!*

#2. It pointed out our **INADEQUACY**:

*If you didn't know it you will never be able to keep the law.*

#3. It pointed us to **THE CROSS**:

*Before you lose hope you have to know about the cross.*

The law served a good purpose and was a vehicle for man's faith. **It was intended though, to make us humble not holy.** You see only God can make us holy!

You need a couple more reasons why you can't work for your salvation,

■ ■ Because (and this is pretty basic but) salvation is a **gift**. **[V 4]**

You can't work for gifts. The minute you work for something it ceases to be a gift! Now as the Bible says there is a way that seems right to man, and that is the way of works and earning, but that is not the way of God. God's way is the FAITH way because it humbles us.

And finally YOU cannot work for your salvation because

■ ■ Because (you know what) **NO ONE** can. **[V 9-11]**

I have talked before about sin is the great equalizer.

Billy Graham and Adolf Hitler next to the Holiness of God are both totally depraved sinners. They stand equally before God. Now Billy Graham by virtue of His FAITH in Christ, not all the sermons he has preached or the lives he has touched or the integrity he has displayed, but by virtue of His faith he is declared righteous and holy.

Sin is the great equalizer because we are all equally unable to justify ourselves before a holy God. At the same time though, consider this... Faith is the great divider.

*There are two people in the world today, those who have faith in Christ and thus the holiness of God and those who don't have faith in God!*

## **DAD FORGIVES DAUGHTER FOR TAKING COINS**

My dad kept a coin jar on his dresser. Every night when he got home from work, the first thing he did was head upstairs to change his clothes. You could hear the familiar jangling of coins as they spilled from his pocket and he set them in the jar. When I was about nine years old, I decided his coins should be mine. Over time I pilfered a few nickels here, a handful of pennies there. Before I knew it, I had successfully swindled my dad out of his loose change, and he never even noticed.

Sometime later, guilt gripped me. I knew that what I'd been doing could only be considered stealing. I had no way to explain away my behavior. With a pounding heart, I penned an apology to him, confessing my sin and asking him to forgive me. I tucked it under his coin jar along with a pile of pennies as restitution.

I waited anxiously for my dad to confront me. Day One went by, and he didn't say anything. Another day passed; still nothing. And then another, and another. Eventually, I forgot about the note.

Then one day out of the blue, my dad stepped into my bedroom and said, "Marian, I got your note and the pennies." My heart raced; my throat felt like a marble was lodged in it .... I was expecting punishment, but ... he seemed on the verge of tears. But that didn't make any sense. I had wronged him. He had every right to be mad and punish me. Instead he said, "Thank you." And then he gave me a hug.

And then he left.

We never spoke of it again.

I stood there dumbfounded. Why, when I fully deserved my father's wrath, did he instead show me mercy? I didn't deserve it; I hadn't earned it. I felt like a criminal let off scot free!

This was my first powerful lesson on judgment and grace. Since then I've never gotten over the way grace feels. It's like waiting for the other shoe to drop, but it never does. It's experiencing utter relief and humility in the face of guilt because you know how bad you can be, but God (or your daddy) chooses to love and forgive you anyway. It is truly God's riches at Christ's expense.

*Marian V. Liautaud, "The Sweet Relief of Grace," KyriaBlog (6-27-11)*

And let me just remind you in case you have forgotten, Grace comes through faith. As amazing as grace is, we don't work for it, we don't deserve it in anyway, we can simply accept it through faith. How humbling is that?

**#1. You see faith accomplishes what we can't!  
We can't SAVE ourselves and then...**

**B. We can't SANCTIFY ourselves.**

Let's talk a few moments about sanctification. We just examined the idea that Righteousness = Justification as in the amazing reality that it is just as if I had never sinned. This is where sanctification comes into the picture. Sanctification is another form of righteousness. Sanctification means I have been set apart.

 **Righteousness = Sanctification = Set Apart**

Now many people try to pit justification against sanctification.

Many people say that justification is God's work and then sanctification is our work but that is simply not true. You see the entire Gospel is predicted on God's way, which as we saw is the way of FAITH and is intended to humble us. Here is a great passage to illustrate this.

**1 Corinthians 1:26-31 ESV**

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

1 Corinthians is very clear that Christ and the Gospel were very humbling realities in Paul's day as they continue to be today. The Gospel and the way of faith is intended to humble us. Note though what all the Gospel and our salvation includes.

It includes Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption.

Now all of these are really different aspects of our being redeemed and made righteous, and all three of these are totally and completely accomplished the moment we are saved. Paul uses them though to illustrate what we could see as the three forms or tenses of our salvation.

- *I have been saved = Justification*
- *I am being saved = Sanctification*
- *I will be saved = Glorification*  
- *This is when I get my glorified body and leave behind my flesh.*

Now it is interesting most people believe that God totally does the work of justification, and they also believe that it is God who will do the work to give me my glorified body. For some reason though people tend to think WE do the work in the middle. WE sanctify ourselves. But we don't! If we did it would only open the door to what? Boasting.

So God does ALL of the work including my sanctification. I have been (past tense) fully sanctified and yet each and every day I can work-out my salvation, live-out my sanctification.

The key is that you don't **BECOME** more sanctified, you simply **LIVE** more sanctified. You don't **BECOME** more HOLY, you simply **LIVE-OUT** more of your holiness. You develop as it were the holiness that is within you.

With that in mind consider a few practical things about our sanctification in regards to our faith.

■ ■ Faith is a LIFESTYLE. [**Rom 4:11-12**]

**Romans 4:11-12 ESV**

He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, 12 and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

The point being emphasized here again goes back to the universal reality of faith, EVERYONE comes to God through faith. Abraham came to God before he was circumcised through faith and those who WERE circumcised still came to God through faith, NOT their circumcision. In other words God did not identify them BY their circumcision as much as he did by their FAITH. The reality is circumcision was never intended to be a one-time religious act, but an ongoing attitude of a heart that was daily cutting away the flesh. A person who was truly circumcised in their heart would be the person who had a sincere faith in God. They cut away the flesh in faith to walk in the Spirit.

I like the terminology here, as it moves faith from sounding like a one-time decision to a life-style. Yes, we believe that today there is that one-time decision where we respond humbly to the Gospel and bow our knee to Christ to find salvation and redemption. Yet that one-time decision is not the end of our faith it is the beginning of our faith, a lifestyle of faith.

**Colossians 1:21-23 ESV**

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

■ ■ I live-out my sanctification through FAITH.

*Faith is a lifestyle that allows me to live-out my sanctification.*

**FAITH SEES ME AS I AM IN CHRIST  
NOT AS I BEHAVE IN THIS WORLD!**

- Faith defines me by my identity in Christ and not my behavior in this world.

The thing is part of our sanctification, part of working-out our salvation and living-out the gospel is learning WHO we are in Christ. I think this is a point we may severely miss. Think about something a moment. If I asked you WHO God was, who Yahweh was, who Christ was, how would you answer me? We know the personal name for God is Yahweh, the Great I Am, the self-existent God. We also know that He is the God of more than a hundred names. Pinning down exactly WHO God is, who Christ is, is something we will never be able to do in this lifetime. In fact we will spend eternity discovering the wonder of who Yahweh, the God of infinite splendor is. Here is the thing though. HE is our identity! Our Identity is wrapped up in WHO HE is. I think that reveals something amazing to us. We can spend a lifetime and never fully know who we are in Christ. At the same time, the sad reality is, we spend so much of our lives letting ourselves be defined by

- ▶ ***Other's people's opinions of us,***
- ▶ ***The lies of Satan,***
- ▶ ***The broken relationships we have encountered,***
- ▶ ***Our shortcomings, failures and outright sin,***
- ▶ ***The hurts we hold on to and***
- ▶ ***The fears that paralyze us.***

Consider the amazing story of Benjamin Kyle.

### **MAN WITH AMNESIA KNOWN THROUGH COMMUNITY**

In the early morning of August 31, 2004, employees of a Burger King in Richmond Hill, GA found a man unconscious next to a dumpster. He was naked, sunburnt, and had bites from red ants. His skull had three depressions, apparently from blunt force trauma. He also had amnesia and was unable to remember his own name, much less how he came to be found beaten behind a Burger King. The employees called 911, and he was taken to a hospital in Savannah; but without identity papers or memory, they listed him only as "Burger King Doe."

For more than ten years he was unable to remember his name and thus was unable to get a Social Security card. He could not obtain a job nor collect any kind of benefits from the government. He named himself "Benjamin Kyle," sensing that his first name might have been Benjamin, and he sought a community that knew him previously to help him piece together his identity. You see, without a community, this man had no access to his story. Finally, with the help of investigative reporters and genetic testing, "Benjamin Kyle" learned his real name and likely family of origin. As he started to identify with his community again he said, "Looking at all these names, all these people, kind of gives me a sense of belonging," he said. "I have a history. I'm not just some stranger that materialized out of thin air."

*Jeffrey Arthurs, Boston, Massachusetts; source: Kent Justice, "Man with no name finally knows real identity," News4Jax.com (9-15-16)*

We let so much from this fallen world define who we are and how we see ourselves. And then there is Christ! He is our Salvation! He is our Sanctification. He is our holiness and righteousness. He is our Identity and it is through faith that we can see ourselves for who we are in Christ and not who we are in this world.

Throughout the Bible Abraham is defined as a man of faith, righteousness and promise. He is defined as one of two people who was a friend of God. The thing is, did Abraham live a perfect life? No. At times his faith wavered. At times he took matters into his own hands and the results were disastrous. Think of Ishmael, the son who was not promised and the father of what we know as Islam today. Still Abraham's mistakes did not negate the promises of God or change his identity in anyway.



The fact is thinking of our sanctification,

■ ■ We have been **set apart** to be a people of FAITH.

Think about that? We are as a church to be a community of faith.

That means in some way we should be defined by our faith.

I wonder if we are? How to be people perceive us?

The thing is you have been sanctified, set apart as it were, to walk in the footsteps of faith, to live a lifestyle of faith.

Oh and yes it is faith that keeps us humble and accomplishes what we can't!

We can't **SAVE** ourselves...

We can't **SANCTIFY** ourselves... and

### **C. We can't SATISFY ourselves. [V1, 5-8]**

Let's go to verse 1. This is the verse that I found the most fascinating and intriguing in this passage today.

#### **Romans 4:1 ESV**

What then shall we say was **gained** by Abraham,  
our forefather according to the flesh?

Now the word **flesh** here can be attributed in one of two ways. It can be attributed to the word father, meaning Abraham is our father in the flesh. But it can also be attributed, and the King James Bible does a better job of emphasizing this, but it can be attributed to the word **gained** or **found**. Listen to the King James?

#### **Romans 4:1 KJV**

What shall we say then that Abraham our father,  
as pertaining to the flesh, **hath found**?

The base question here is what does Abraham teach us about our own flesh? What did Abraham gain or find in his flesh? What will we find or gain in our own flesh? The best way to understand the flesh here is to see it as the opposite of the Spirit. Here are some great complimentary verses.

**Galatians 3:3 ESV**

Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit,  
are you now being perfected by the flesh?

**Philippians 3:3 ESV**

For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit,  
rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

The simple fact is there is nothing to be gained in the flesh. The flesh will never satisfy us. In the Garden of Eden there is the tree of Life and the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, the trees of identified as Spirit and flesh. In short there is NOTHING to be gained living in the flesh. It can never satisfy us in any way.

Now we saw earlier the three tenses of our salvation.

- Our salvation, Past: Justification
- Our salvation, Present: Sanctification and
- Our salvation, Future: Glorification

In fact Paul speaks of our future tense salvation in Ephesians 4...

**Ephesians 4:30 ESV**

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,  
by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Have you been redeemed? Yes!  
Will you BE Redeemed? YES!

There is a day when our redemption will be fully realized, that is the day we receive our glorified bodies. Remember when Jesus was resurrected and He was not readily recognized. People identified Him through the words he spoke and the tone of His voice, not by His looks. This was because Jesus had received His glorified body.

Okay here is the tie back and don't miss this.

One day we receive our glorified bodies and leave behind the flesh and at that moment we will never have been more satisfied!

I hear people all of the time talking about the greatest day of their life.

Maybe it was a ball game they went to.

Maybe it was a promotion they received.

Maybe it was a person they met.

I always cringe when someone speaks of the greatest day of their life and they fail to mention the day they met Christ! The day we are saved should be the greatest day of our life! Well let me tell you that the day you get your glorified body and leave behind your flesh, that will be the greatest day in your life for eternity!

I want you to think about the implications of what I am sharing here because I think it is more powerful than we may realize. Consider some very basic truths about our flesh.

■ ■ First our flesh is never SATISFIED. It never will be satisfied. We have to constantly FEED the flesh. In fact it is our flesh that can become ADDICTED to any number of things. We can become addicted to...

- Food
- Money
- Power
- Sex
- Drugs
- Alcohol

**Ecclesiastes 5:10 ESV**

He who loves money will not be satisfied with money,  
nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.

**Ecclesiastes 6:7 ESV**

All the toil of man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied.

**Proverbs 16:26 ESV**

A worker's appetite works for him; his mouth urges him on.

We are always hungry and unsatisfied and that keeps us working.

The thing is how many people today spend their entire life working to satisfy the flesh and when they come to the end of their life what are they left with? Nothing but regrets.

- *It doesn't matter how much money they have earned.*
- *It doesn't matter how much power they wielded.*
- *It doesn't matter how many worlds they have conquered.*

None of it matters. Why?

Because there is NOTHING to be gained in the flesh.

Let's counter the verses we just looked at though...

**Romans 14:17 ESV**

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking  
but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Note where we find PEACE and JOY? Not in the eating and drinking but in Righteousness.

**Lamentations 3:24 ESV**

"The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

■ ■ Second our flesh is seldom GRATEFUL.

I say seldom because we can be somewhat thankful in our flesh. Gratitude is one of the healthiest and most powerful attitudes we can live with. Someone in their flesh can be grateful for the benefits. True gratitude though, flows from the Spirit and not the flesh. The more we live at the flesh tree the more ungrateful we be. The more entitled we will act. If I'm not satisfied it will stand to reason that I will not be grateful.

Yet in the spirit, and this is amazing, but Faith allows me to live in the Spirit where I can be satisfied when things aren't good and I can be grateful when things aren't great!

That was Paul's experience. He knew how to be satisfied when he had a lot and when he had a little.

Our flesh is never satisfied and seldom grateful and yet you know what.

■ ■ Our FAITH will SATISFY us in ways we cannot even imagine.

⚙ Faith is a position of Humility.

⚙ Faith is a position of Intimacy.

⚙ Faith is a position of Worship.

### **THE BRILLIANCE OF THE GOSPEL:**

We will never be able to look at God again and think "I don't need you."