

H.C. Questions 56-59 – Everlasting Life in Christ – Sermon Outline

Intro: Christ's atonement for our salvation gives us joy in Him and the certainty of everlasting life.

Need: Christ saves us by justifying us in Himself, continually sanctifying us, and will one day glorify us.

Theme: In Christ we have joy because our sin is forgiven, eternal life begun, and glory awaits.

1. God no longer remembers our sinfulness because of Christ's righteousness and payment for our sin.
2. Everlasting life will be enjoyed in God's presence, with our souls and bodies united and glorified in Christ.

I. God no longer remembers our sinfulness because of Christ's righteousness and payment for our sin.

- A. A hearty meal satisfies our stomachs, bodies, and souls. Christ's atonement was satisfactory to God.
1. The animal sacrifices are consumed by the Lord in the burnt offerings, and the incense was a sweet smelling aroma to the Lord that satisfied Him. But that was a picture of what truly satisfies God.
 2. We know that the blood of bulls and goats do not take away sin, but point to Christ who takes away sin, and indeed, when Israel brought their animal sacrifices in faith, that faith received Christ, and they were forgiven of their sins because of His righteousness, sacramentally seen through blood offerings.
 3. In Leviticus we see the offerings generally had to be a goat or calf or lamb without blemish. It had to be without defect, picturing sinlessness, purity, goodness, being sacrificed for sin, wickedness.
 4. What God is receiving is not sin, He is not consuming or satisfied with sinners and their sin. He was satisfied in the old covenant with spotless animal sacrifices, connected to Christ of course, for the forgiveness of sins for those under the old covenant.
 5. But now that Christ has shed His blood as a spotless lamb, that is, without sin, in perfect righteousness, all must come to the Father through Him. Christ bore our sin, as a sinless, righteous man on the cross.
 6. As an animal was sacrificed without blemish in the prime of life, so Christ in the prime of life, perfectly righteous, without sin, was sacrificed for sinners, and that perfect, righteous, sin-bearing sacrifice is what truly pleases the Lord. **So we in Christ now please the Lord by doing righteousness for Him.**
 7. After David's sin with Bathsheba and the murder he committed to cover it up, once confronted by Nathan the Prophet, his Psalm of repentance is instructive, **51:14ff.**: *"Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise. Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem. Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, With burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar."*
 8. Interestingly, Matthew Poole comments on this passage, noting that there was no animal sacrifice to be made for adultery and murder, in fact the death penalty was required. What can spare David's life?
 9. **"A broken and a contrite heart, thou wilt not despise"**. That was the only thing that could save not only David's soul, but his bodily life. Not that God was required to spare His bodily life, but He kindly did so.
 10. Repentance will certainly grant everlasting life, the highest blessing, even though it may not grant temporal blessings of an extended life on earth. **God did not save us from death/punishment in this life.**

11. This is actually comforting, because Christ promises we will have trouble, tribulation, sickness, betrayal, danger, ultimately death in this life. That shouldn't cause us to question God's goodness or our salvation. Salvation is not to be delivered from misery in this life, but misery in the life to come.
 12. And as eternal life has begun for those in Christ now, even the miseries of this life, the burden of it, is lessened, knowing the joy we have in Christ, the comfort of His Word, Spirit, and holy people/Church.
 13. When we sin, even greatly, we have a great Savior, but we must repent greatly to be restored to joy.
- B. God has purposed to present us to His Son as a spotless bride, a pure and holy Temple, His body.
1. What God/Christ delights in, is our righteousness, and the first step toward that is repentance.
 2. For the sinner, true repentance is true righteousness. Sanctification is not less repentance, but more!
 3. The regular animal sacrifices were supposed to match the heart of the people, penitent, contrite, grieving their sins, and looking to God's provision in Christ, His spotless, righteous atonement.
 4. Repentance for us today is still like offering up the animal sacrifices of old, but now it is our broken and contrite hearts, which the Lord will not despise, that God is pleased with.
 5. But note, He is not pleased even with our repentance apart from Christ's righteousness!
 6. This is why the animal blood had to be shed before Christ's blood was shed, even when there was real repentance among the Israelites. Because Christ has shed His blood now, we can go to the Father through the Son, the High Priest in Heaven, rather than an earthly high priest with animal blood!
 7. So our godly lives are the sacrifice to the Lord, and when we sin, our heart repentance is pleasing to the Lord, but only because of Christ the Son, who has paid for sin and perfects our imperfect good works and our imperfect repentance. Christ is still washing us clean by His Word/Spirit from heaven.
- C. Thus David concludes **Psalm 51:19**, saying the Lord is pleased "with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar."
1. Righteous sacrifices flow from the heart, as Christ would say, "rend your heart and not your garments".
 2. But note, this is not divorced from the blood sacrifice of the bullocks. Only righteous blood makes even our genuine, contrite prayers of praise and repentance pleasing to God. Christ's blood sanctifies all.
 3. So our prayers today are still offered up in blood, the blood sacrifice of Christ, to which we appeal, for which we ought to pray, "hear us O Lord, for the sake of Christ, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen."
 4. And yes, there was a scale of animal sacrifices, sometimes based on economic status, you could offer birds instead of lambs or goats if you were more poor.
 5. But the more heinous the sin, etc., or the more the Lord wanted to show the costliness of forgiveness of great sins, the greater/more expensive the animal, like a bullock or many bullocks, had to be offered.
 6. Likewise today, we should confess our sins with true proportion, the greater the sin, the greater the repentance ought to be, and will be, if it is sincere, pleading the blood of Christ throughout the prayer.
 7. The Lord despises the false prayers and repentance of the wicked, **Prov. 15:8-9**, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, But the prayer of the upright is His delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, But He loves him who follows righteousness."
 8. **Isaiah 1:12-15**, God is condemning His wicked, wayward people, comparing them to Sodom and Gomorrah, etc., "When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies— I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing

them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.”

9. Think of many churches today, and how much the Lord hates those false assemblies. May the Lord punish and destroy them and make us more pure and righteous through His Son to receive our worship!
 10. Even for true Christians and true churches, when we pray to God while harboring sin in our hearts, the joy of our salvation is lost – though not salvation itself – and our prayers are not heard by the Lord.
 11. But when we are truly repentant and truly striving to serve the Lord faithfully, God hears and grants all our faithful prayers, delights in us, and we in Him, through the atoning, righteous sacrifice of Christ.
- D. Note also, if we do not regard our children as God’s covenant people, they should not pray to God.
1. Nor worship Him in church, for we are asking God to receive the prayers and worship of those who we are declaring are outside His covenant/kingdom, and outside of His gracious reception.
 2. Thanks be to God, Jesus receives even the infants of believers in **Luke 18:15**, having rebuked the disciples for trying to prevent the infants being brought to Him, and Jesus says “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the Kingdom of God.”
 3. Our infant children are not pagans, but part of God’s Church/Kingdom/Covenant from infancy.
 4. So teach them to pray to Your God, and their God, “**Our Father who art in heaven**”.
 5. God is their God, and Christ is their Lord and Savior, whom they must trust in, follow, and obey all their lives, so have them in the worship service and discipline them to listen, praise, and worship.
 6. God’s covenant and baptism is worse than meaningless, but judgment, if we fail to do so.
 7. Children, do not forsake the Lord’s mercies, that Christ from infancy has received you into His arms, into His lap, has blessed you and prayed for you, as **Matt. 19:13-15** and **Mark 10** says.
 8. You have been baptized into Christ, and are duty bound by covenant to serve Him all your life.
 9. For those who turn away, whether having joined the church as a baby or an adult, the judgment is more severe. And yet, the blessings in Christ and His Church are great for those who grab them by faith.
- E. Now, does God remember our sins that we commit daily? Yes and no. They are forgiven, but damaging.
1. They damage our relationship to Christ, to His people, to our wife and children, etc.
 2. But, God views us in our union with Christ as fully forgiven of His eternal wrath in hell. That judgment, that wrath, is remembered no more. The Lord still sees and is displeased with our sins that we commit.
 3. But His displeasure is as a reconciled and loving Father who has forgiven us damnation/abandonment.
 4. So His displeasure leads to our chastisement/discipline for our good, to sanctify us, strengthen us.
 5. God has purposed to sanctify us in this life through His Son, and bring us to sinless, spotless, glory at the return of His Son, and does so on the basis of the finished work of His Son, justifying us now!
 6. So declared righteous in Christ now, already, that declaration of forgiveness and righteousness through Christ’s blood is never lost or taken away, the Lord will never leave nor forsake us, but will correct us.
 7. Indeed, He has forgiven all our iniquities, as Ps. 103:3 says, yet still disciplines us for our iniquities.
 8. Again, our forgiveness at root is not owing to our sanctification, but our justification in Christ. Thus our prayers of faith, repentance, praise, request, confession, etc., are still imperfect, and can serve as no basis for justification, but flow from justification, and do increase us in our sanctification/holiness.
 9. But again, because they flow from sinful hearts that we must struggle against all our lives as the H.C. says, and are still mixed with imperfect and sinful impulses, Christ’s blood must cover them as well.

10. But because in Christ we have His righteousness imputed to us, and in Christ by His Word and Spirit we have His grace pouring into us for growth in godliness, to be built up into a holy temple, spotless bride, healthy body serving Him and one another, we will never come to condemnation/damnation.

II. Everlasting life will be enjoyed in God's presence, with our souls and bodies united and glorified in Christ.

- A. This is a good transition to our final point, that God who has justified us, is sanctifying us, promises to bring us to glory in His holy presence for all eternity, so that we worship, serve, rule, and glorify Him, fully blessed in His presence, and fully enjoying His glorious presence that covers all of heaven and earth.
 1. In fact, God's glory expands to encompass all creation in fullness, as if all that He has made will be immediately in His glorious presence, as it was in the holy of holies, as it is in heaven above.
 2. **Will we enjoy anything but God Himself in the state of glory?** No, God alone will be enjoyed, but that is because God alone ought to be enjoyed now, including through the things He has made.
 3. Whatever we enjoy in this life, is a gift from God, and therefore, to enjoy the gift, properly understood, is to enjoy, praise, and thank the giver of the gift as well.
 4. To enjoy the blessing of family, of friends, of Church family, is also to enjoy God as seen in His image, for man is the highest gift God gives, and of course the redeemed family is the body of Christ.
 5. To enjoy anything in this life, without giving thanks to God who gives all good things for enjoyment, is to sin, to sever the gift/good thing from the giver, the Lord, and to nearly idolize the good gift.
 6. Food, drink, love, friendship, success in business, victory over enemies, better health and diet, all of these things are good gifts from God, demanding that He be praised as the source/giver of these things.
 7. To have all that in perfection in the state of glory, from the fountain, God, face to face, will be inexplicable joy, and then in that joy, to worship Him, serve Him, and rule with Him, is to be His image.
- B. But we are in the trenches of life today, this world full of sin, and our flesh still sinful. Yet Rom. 8:1-11:
 1. *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."*
 2. Notice the connection. We are not condemned if we are in Christ Jesus, and those who are in Christ Jesus [justified], are walking not according to the sinful flesh, but by the Holy Spirit who indwells them [sanctification].
 3. Christ condemned sin in the flesh, for that is from which we sin, for the purpose of the righteous requirement of the law to be fulfilled in us, that is, one, that we are [justified]/counted righteous in Christ now, but also, that we do not walk according to the flesh but the Spirit, [sanctification].

4. Further, for those who are in the Spirit not the flesh -- not meaning we are disembodied, but our lives are controlled by serving the Lord by the Spirit, not sinning against the Lord with the sinful flesh -- we are indwelt by the Spirit of God/Christ, controlled by His Spirit to grow in holiness as we do not resist the Spirit but do resist the devil and the sinful fleshly desires that remain.
 5. The same Spirit of God/Christ that indwells us, raised Jesus from the dead, and thus we have the sure promise and thus should have a sure faith/confidence, that "He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." Ultimately, glorification.
 6. Christ was raised to be glorified, and so shall we. But that state of glory has not begun in this life, and will only begin at Christ's return.
 7. His present rule/reign from the Father's right hand does not bring in the state of glory, but increasingly sanctifies His people, and by extension, leavens and sanctifies the nations of the world.
 8. But sanctification cannot usher in glorification. Christ will do so at His return, resurrecting Creation itself, including the creaturely part of us, our bodies [God created our souls, but they are immaterial].
 9. Only in the state of glory will every tear be wiped away from our eyes, every battle against sin be gone forevermore, and even we ourselves, as it were, will remember no longer our sins and miseries.
 10. Until then, we grow in holiness, we grind and fight for godliness, we rejoice with those who rejoice, but we still shed tears and mourn with those who mourn, but we do not grieve as those without hope.
 11. For we have the sure hope of resurrection, when Christ returns from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.
 12. Then all who are alive and remain will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and we shall always be with the Lord. So take comfort in those words, **1 Thess. 4:16-18**.
- C. **But that foretaste of eternal glory is given to us now, who have entered eternal life in Christ already.**
1. So H.C. 58 says we already feel in our hearts the beginning of eternal joy, though the state of perfect blessedness awaits the state of glory, and that blessed which we cannot even comprehend will lead to our everlasting praise and worship and thankfulness to God.
 2. John 17, Jesus prays for His people, and says eternal life is knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ the Son, whom the Father sent. In John 17:13, Jesus speaks of His disciples having His joy fulfilled in themselves, through His Word, which sanctifies them, and is Truth.
 3. Christ closes His prayer for His elect people, asking the Father to bring the ones He gave Christ to be with Him where He is, in glory, that they may behold Christ's glory, and then says "I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." **Our delight in glory & even now, is that God loves us even as He has eternally loved His Son!**
 4. Rom. 14:17 says the Kingdom of God/Heaven is not eating and drinking, but "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." We have entered that Kingdom already, in Christ, by His Spirit.
 5. One day, in the state of glory, we will enter the Kingdom of Heaven body and soul ourselves, to be with the Lord and see Him face to face. But that joy, righteousness, and peace, has begun in this life, and increases as we strive for it and grow in sanctification by His Word and Spirit in home and church.
 6. As 1 Cor. 15 and 2 Cor. 5 tell us, we groan awaiting the resurrection and glorification of our bodies, when we are further clothed with immortality, eternal life, knowing "He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee," **2 Cor. 5:5**.

7. That joy and taste of glorified, eternal life, does not cause us to be lax, but to long for righteousness all the more, by seeking to increase that taste of glory in our lives now.
 8. In other words, the reality of not only our justification -- being declared righteous in Christ and His righteousness -- but also the future prospect of our glorification increases our joy and motivates us to love and serve Him by the Spirit now, increasing our sanctification/growth in holy/godly living.
- D. **CONCLUSION:** H.C. 59, what does it help that we believe all this right now?
1. It is the certainty of salvation, and only in that certainty can we have joy, and have fruitful service to God, not fretting about our Spiritual well-being, but serving our covenant Lord and Savior confidently.
 2. Knowing you are righteous before God (justified) and an heir to life everlasting (glorified), and that life has begun in you by the Word and Spirit now (sanctified), you know what you've been saved from -- sin, death, the devil and the eternal wrath of God -- and what you are saved unto -- knowledge, wisdom, righteousness, peace in God in glory with Him and His holy people forever!
 3. Worship & serve the Lord in that confidence; love & serve the brethren knowing we are all part of Christ's body forever, will be brought to glory forever, and so must grow into Christ our head together.
 4. **Let us pray.**