

The Bliss of the Glorified

by C.H. Spurgeon

The bliss of the glorified is a state of happiness and fulfillment in heaven, achieved through the Lamb that was slain, the blood of Jesus, and the love of God.

Scripture: Romans 5:4, Romans 8:35, 2 Corinthians 2:9, 2 Corinthians 8:2, 2 Corinthians 9:13, 2 Corinthians 13:3, Philippians 2:22, James 1:12, 1 Peter 1:6

Topics: "Suffering And Trials", "Proven Character"

Description

Wayne Barber delves into the concept of proven character (dokime) in the Bible, emphasizing that enduring trials and afflictions promote and validate the character of believers. The process of being tested and standing firm in faith results in a genuine, authentic, and proven character, leading to a sense of hope and certainty in God's promises. Suffering is viewed as a means to display the genuineness of one's faith and to strengthen the believer's hope in God's faithfulness and love.

Transcript

WE cannot too often turn our thoughts heavenward, for this is one of the great cures for worldliness. The way to liberate our souls from the bonds that tie us to earth is to strengthen the cords that kind us to heaven. You will think less of this poor little globe when you think more of the world to come. This contemplation will also serve to console us for the loss, as we call it, of those who have gone before. It is their gain, and we will rejoice in it. We cannot have a richer source of consolation than this, that they who have fallen asleep in Christ have not perished; they have not lost life, but they have gained the fullness of it.

They are rid at all that molests us here, and they enjoy more than we as yet can imagine. Cheer your hearts, ye mourners, by looking up to the gate of pearl, by looking up--to those who day without night surround the throne of their Redeemer. It will also tend to quicken our diligence if we think much of heaven. Suppose I should miss it after all! What if I should not so run that I may obtain! If heaven be little, I shall be but a little loser by losing it; but if it be indeed such that the half could never be told us, then, may God grant us diligence to make our calling and election sure, that we may be certain of entering into this rest, and may not be like the many who came out of Egypt, but who perished in the wilderness and never entered into the promised land.

All things considered, I know of no meditation that is likely to be more profitable than a frequent consideration of the rest which remaineth for the people of God. I ask, then, for a very short time that your

thoughts may go upward to the golden streets. And, first, we shall think a little of the blessedness of the saints as described in the simple words of our text; then we will say a few words as to how they came by that felicity; and thirdly, draw some practical lessons from it.

First, then, we have here:-- I. A DESCRIPTION OF THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE GLORIFIED. We have not the full description of it here; but we have here a description of certain evils from which they are free. You notice they are of two or three kinds--first, such as originate within--"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more"--they are free from inward evils; secondly, such as originate without--"Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." They are altogether delivered from the results of outward circumstances.

Take the first: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." We are never so to strain Scripture for a spiritual sense as to take away its natural sense, and hence we will begin by saying this is no doubt to be understood physically of the body they will have in glory. Whether there will be a necessity for eating and drinking in heaven, we will not say, for we are not told, but anyhow it is met by the text, "The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them"--if they need food--"and lead them to living fountains of water" if they need to drink.

Whatever may be the necessities of the future, those necessities shall never cause a pang. Here, the man who is hungry may have to ask the question, "What shall I eat?"; the man who is thirsty may have to say, "What shall I drink?"; and we have all to ask, "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" But such questions shall never arise there. They are abundantly supplied. Children of God have been hungry here: the great Son of God, the head of the household was hungry before them; and they need not wonder if they have fellowship with him in this suffering.

Children of God have had to thirst here: their great Lord and Master said, "I thirst"; they need not wonder, therefore, if in his affliction they have to take some share. Should not they who are to be like their head in heaven be conformed unto him on earth? But up yonder there is no poverty, and there shall be no accident that shall place them in circumstances of distress. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." While we take this physically, there is no doubt that it is to be understood mentally.

Our minds are also constantly the victims of hungerings and thirstings. There are on earth various kinds of this hunger and thirst--in a measure evil, in a measure also innocent. There are many men that in this world are hungering after wealth, and the mouth of avarice can never be filled. It is as insatiable as the horse-leech, and for ever cries, "Give, give!" But such hunger was never known in heaven, and never can be, for they are satisfied there; they have all things and abound.

All their enlarged capacities can desire they already possess, in being near the throne of God and beholding his glory; there is no wealth which is denied them. Here, too, some of the sons of men hunger after fame, and oh! what have not men done to satisfy this? It is said that breaks through stone walls; certainly ambition has done it. Death at the cannon's mouth has been a trifle, if a man might win the bubble reputation. But in heaven there is no such hunger as that. Those who once had it, and are saved, scorn ambition henceforth.

And what room would there be for ambition in the skies? They take their crowns and cast them at their Saviour's feet. They have their palm-branches, for they have won the victory, but they ascribe the conquest to the Lamb, their triumph to his death. Their souls are satisfied with his fame. The renown of Christ has filled their spirit with everlasting contentment. They hunger no more, nor thirst any more, in that

respect. And oh! what hunger and thirst there has been on earth by those of tender and large heart for a fit object of love!

I mean not now the common thing called "love," but the friendship which is in man's heart, and sends out its tendrils wanting something to which to cling. We must--we are born and created for that very purpose--we must live together, we cannot develop ourselves alone. And oftentimes a lonely spirit has yearned for a brother's ear, into which to pour its sorrows; and doubtless many a man has been brought to destruction and been confined to the lunatic asylum whose reason might have been saved had there been some sympathetic spirit, some kind, gentle heart that would have helped to bear his burden.

Oh! the hunger and the thirst of many a soul after a worthy object of confidence. But they hunger and they thirst, up there, no more. Their love is all centred on their Saviour. Their confidence, which they reposed in him on earth, is still in him. He is their bosom's Lord, their heart's Emperor, and they are satisfied, and, wrapped up in him, they hunger and they thirst no more. And how many young spirits there are on earth that are hungering after knowledge who would fain get the hammer and break the rock, and find out the history of the globe in the past.

They would follow philosophy, if they could, to its source, and find out the root of the matter. Oh! to know, to know, to know! The human mind pants and thirsts for this. But there they know even as they are known. I do not know that in heaven they know all things--that must be for the Omniscient only--but they know all they need or really want to know; they are satisfied there. There will be no longer searching with a spirit that is ill at ease. They may, perhaps, make progress even there, and the scholar may become daily more and more wise; but there shall never be such a hungering and thirsting as to cause their mental faculties the slightest pang.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. Oh! blessed land where the seething ocean of man's mind is hushed, and sleeps in everlasting calm! Oh! blessed country where the hungry spirit, that crieth every hour for bread, and yet for more, and yet for more, and spends its labour for that which satisfieth not, shall be fed with the bread of angels, and be satisfied with favour and full of the goodness of the Lord. But, dear friends, surely the text also means our spiritual hungering and thirsting.

"Blessed is the man that hungers and thirst to-day after righteousness, for he shall be filled." This a kind of hunger that we ought to desire to have; this is a sort of thirst that the more you have of it will be the indication of the possession of more grace. On earth it is good for saints to hunger and to thirst spiritually, but up there they have done even with that blessed hunger and that blessed thirst. Today, beloved, some of us are hungering after holiness. Oh! what would I not give to be holy, to be rid of sin, of every evil thing about me!

My eyes--ah! adieu sweet light, if I might also say, "Adieu sin! "My mouth--ah! well would I be content to be dumb if I might preach by a perfect life on earth! There is no faculty I know of that might not be cheerfully surrendered if the surrender of it would deprive us of sin. But they never thirst for holiness in heaven, for this excellent reason, that they are without fault before the throne of God. Does it not make your mouth water? Why this is the luxury of heaven to be perfect.

Is not this--the heaven of heaven, to be clean rid of the root and branch of sin, and not a rag or bone, or piece of a bone of our old depravity left--all gone like our Lord, made perfect without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. And here, too, brethren and sisters, we very rightly hunger and thirst after full assurance and confidence. Many are hungering after it; they hope they are saved, and they thirst to be assured that they

are. But there is no such thirst as that in heaven, for, having crossed the golden threshold of Paradise, no saint ever asks himself, "Am I saved?"

They see his face without a cloud between; they bathe in the sea of his love; they cannot question that which they perpetually enjoy. So, too, on earth I hope we know what it is to hunger and thirst for fellowship with Christ. Oh! when he is gone from us--if he do but hide his face from us, how we cry, "My soul desires thee in the night"! We cannot be satisfied unless we have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. But in heaven they have no such thing. There the shepherd is always with the Sheep, the King is ever near them, and because of his perpetual presence their hungering and their thirsting will be banished for ever.

Thus much upon those evils, then, that would arise from within. As they are perfect, whatever comes from within is a source of pleasure to them, and never of pain. And now, dear friends, the evils that come from without: let us think of them. We no doubt can appreciate in some measure, though not to the degree which we should if we were in Palestine in the middle of summer--we can appreciate the words, "Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." This signifies that nothing external shall injure the blessed.

Take it literally. There shall be nothing in the surroundings of heavenly saints that shall cause glorified spirits any inconvenience. I think we may take it mainly in relation to the entire man glorified; and so let us say that on earth the sun lights on us and many heats in the form of affliction. What heats of affliction some here have passed through! Why there are some here who are seldom free from physical pain. There are many of the best of God's children that, if they get an hour without pain, are joyful indeed.

There are others that have had a great fight of affliction Through poverty they have fought hard. They have been industrious, but somehow or other God has marked them out for the scant tables and the thread-worn garments. They are the children of poverty, and the furnace heat is very hot about them. With others it has been repeated deaths of those they have loved. Ah! how sad is the widow's case! How deep the grief of the fatherless! How great the sorrow of bereaved parents!

Sometimes the arrows of God fly one after the other; first one falls and then another until we think we shall hardly have one left. These are the heats of the furnace of affliction. And at other times these take the form of ingratitude from children. I think we never ought to repine so much about the death of a child as about the ungodly life of a child. A dead cross is very heavy, but a living cross is heavier far. Many a mother has had a son of whom she might regret that he did not die even the very hour of his birth, for he has lived to be the grief of his parents, and a dishonour to their name.

These are sharp trials--these heats--but you shall have done with them soon. "Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." No poverty, no sickness, no bereavement, no ingratitude--nothing of the kind. They for ever rest from affliction. Heat sometimes comes in another form--in the matter of temptation. Oh! how some of God's people have been tried--tried by their flesh! Their constitution, perhaps, has been hot, impulsive, and they have been carried off their feet, or would have been but for the interposing grace of God, many and many a time.

They have been tempted, too, in their position, and they of their own household have been their enemies. They have been tempted by their peculiar circumstances; their feet have almost gone many a time. And they have been tempted by the devil; and hard work it is to stand against Satanic insinuations. It is hot, indeed, when his fiery darts fly. Oh! when we shall have once crossed the river, how some of us who have been much tempted will look back upon that old dog of hell, and laugh him to scorn because he will not be

able even to bark at us again!

Then we shall be for ever free from him. He worries us now because he would devour us, but there, as he cannot devour, so shall he not even worry us. "Neither shall the sun " of temptation " light on them, nor any heat." Happy are the people that are in such a case. The heats of persecution have often, too, carried about the saints. It is the lot of God's people to be tried in this way. Through much tribulation of this sort they inherit the kingdom; but there are no Smithfields in heaven, and no Bonners to light up the faggots, no Inquisitions in heaven, no slanderers there to spoil the good man's name.

They shall never have the heat of persecution to suffer again. And, once more, they shall not have the heat of care. I do not know that we need have it, even here; but there are a great many of God's people who allow care to get very hot about them. Even while sitting in this place to-night while the hymn was going up, "What must it be to be there! " the thoughts of some of you have been going away to your business, or your home. While we are trying to preach and draw your attention upwards, perhaps some housewife is thinking of something she has left out which ought to have been looked up before she came away, or wondering where she left the key.

We make any excuses for care through the cares we continually invent, forgetting the words, "Cast all your care on him. for he careth for you." But they have no cares in heaven. "They hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." Ah! good man, there shall be no ships at sea by-and-bye--no harvests--to trouble you as to whether the good weather will last! Ah! good woman, you shall have no more children that are sickly to fret over, for there you will have all you desire, and be in a family circle that is unbroken, for all the brothers and sisters of God's family shall by-and-bye be there, and so you shall be eternally blest.

We have thus opened up as well as we could the words of the text on the felicity of the saints. Now, very briefly:-- II. How DO THEY COME TO BE HAPPY? Well, it is quite clear that they did not come to it because they were very fortunate people on earth, for if you read another passage of the Word of God you will find, "These are they that came out of great tribulation." Those that have had trial and suffering on earth are amongst those that have the bliss of heaven. Encourage yourselves, you poor and suffering ones.

It is quite certain they did not come there from their own merit, for we read, they have "washed their robes"--they wanted washing. They did not keep them always undefiled. There had been spots upon them. They came there not because they deserved to be there, but because of the rich grace of God. How did they come there then? Well, first, they came there through the lamb that was slain. He bore the sun and the heat, and, therefore, the sun doth not light on them, nor any heat.

The hot sun of Jehovah's justice shone full upon the Saviour--scorched, and burned, and consumed him with grief and anguish; and because the Saviour suffered, therefore we suffer it no more. All our hopes of heaven are found at the cross. But they came there next because the Saviour shed his blood. They washed their robes in it. Faith linked them to the Saviour. The fountain would not have cleansed their robes if they had not washed in it. Oh! there shall be none come to heaven but such as have by faith embraced what God provides.

Dear hearer, judge thyself whether thou art right, therefore. Hast thou washed thy robe and made it white in the Lamb's blood? Is Christ all in all to thee? If not, canst thou hope to be there? And they are there in perfect bliss, we are told. No sun lights on them, nor any heat, because the Lamb in the midst of the

throne is with them. How could they be unhappy who see Christ? Is not this the secret of their bliss, that Jesus fully reveals himself to them? And besides, they have the love of God to enjoy, for the last word of the chapter is, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

The blood of Jesus applied, the presence of Jesus enjoyed, and the love of God fully revealed--these are the causes of the bliss of the saved in heaven. But we must close our meditation with the last point, which is:-- III. WHAT THIS TEACHES US. First, the bliss of the saved in glory teaches us to long for it. It is legitimate to long for heaven--not to long to escape from doing our duty here. It is idleness to be always wanting to have done with this world--it is clear sloth--but to be longing to be where Jesus is, is only natural and gracious.

Should not the child long to go home from the school? Should not the captive pine for liberty? Should not the traveller in foreign lands long to see his native country? Should not the bride, the married wife, when she has been long away from her husband, long to see his face? If you did not long for heaven, surely you might question whether heaven belonged to you. If you have ever tasted of the joys of the saints, as believers do on earth, you will sing with full soul:--

"My thirsty spirit faints

To reach the land I love

The bright inheritance of saints,

Jerusalem above."

You may long for this.

And the next lesson is, be patient until you get there. As it will be such a blessed place when you arrive, don't trouble about the difficulties of the way. You know our hymn:--

"The way may be rough, but it cannot be long."

So

"Let us fill it with hope, and cheer it with song."

You know how well your horse goes when you turn its head homewards. Perhaps you had to flog him a bit before, but when he begins to know he is going down the long lane which leads home he will soon lift up his ears, and away, away he will go. We ought to have as much sense as horses. Our heads are turned towards heaven We are steering towards that port--homeward bound. It may be rough weather but we shall soon be in the fair haven where not a wave of trouble shall ever disturb us again. Be patient, be patient. The husbandman has waited for the precious fruits of the earth; you can well wait for the precious things of heaven. You sow in tears, but you shall reap in joy. He has promised you a harvest. He who cannot lie has said the seed-time and harvest shall never cease They do not cease below; depend upon it, they won't cease above. There is a harvest for you who have been sowing here below.

Our first lesson, then, is, long for this, and then be patient in waiting. But our next lesson is to be, wait your appointed time. And now the next instruction is, make much of faith. They entered heaven because they had washed their robes in blood. Make much of the blood and much of the faith by which you have washed. Dear hearers, have you all got faith? It is, as it were, the key of blessedness. "But all men have

not faith," says the Apostle. Hast thou faith? Dost thou believe in Christ Jesus? In other words, dost thou trust thyself alone with him? Can you sing with our poet:--

"Nothing in my hand I bring

Simply to thy cross I cling;

Naked, come to thee for dress,

Helpless, look to thee for grace.

Foul, I to the fountain fly,

Wash me, Saviour, or I die"?

Make much of the faith that will admit you to heaven. Once more, our text teaches us this lesson--Do any of us want to know what heaven is on earth? Most of us will say, "Aye" to that. Well then, the text tells you how to find heaven on earth. You find it in the same way as they find it in heaven. First, be thou washed in the blood of Christ, and that will be a great help towards happiness on earth. It will give thee peace now, "the peace of God that passeth all understanding."

Some people think that heaven on earth is to be found in the theatre, and in the ballroom, and in the giddy haunts of fashion. Well, it may be heaven to some, but if God has any love to you, it won't be heaven to you. Wash your robe, therefore, in the Saviour's blood, and there will be the beginning of heaven on earth. Then next, it appears, if you read the connection of our text, that those who enjoy heaven serve God day and night in his temple. If you want heaven on earth, serve God continually day and night.

Having washed your robe first, then put it on, and go out to serve God. Idle Christians are often unhappy Christians I have met with many a spiritual dyspeptic always full of doubts and fears. Is there a young man here full of doubts and fears who has lost the light he once possessed, and the joy he once had? Dear brother, get to work. In cold weather the best way to be warm is not to get before a fire, but to work. Exercise gives a healthy glow, even amidst the frost. "I am doing something," says one.

Yes, with one hand; use the other hand. "Perhaps I should have too many irons in the fire," says one. You cannot have too many. Put them all in, and blow the fire with all the bellows you can get. I do not believe any Christian man works too hard, and, as a rule, if those who kill themselves in Christ's service were buried in a cemetery by themselves, it would be a long while before it would get filled. Work hard for Christ. It makes happy those who are in heaven to serve God day and night, and it will make you happy on earth.

Do all you can. Another way is to have fellowship with Christ here. Read again this chapter. "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them--he shall feed them." Oh! if you want to be happy, live near to Jesus. Poor men are not poor when Christ lives in their house. Truly, sick men have their beds made easy when Christ is there. Has he not said, "I will make his bed in all his sickness"? Only get fellowship with Jesus, and outward circumstances won't distress you. The sun will not light on you, nor any heat.

You will be like the shepherd on Salisbury Plain, who said it was good weather, though it rained hard. "It is weather," said he, "that pleases me." "How so?" said a traveller to him. "Well, sir," he said, "it pleases God, and what pleases God pleases me." "Good day!" said one to a Christian man. "I never had a bad day

since I was converted," said he. "They are all good now since Christ is my Saviour." Do you not see, then, that if your wishes are subdued, if you do not hunger any more, or thirst any more as you used to do, and if you always live near to Christ, you will begin to enjoy heaven on earth.

Begin, then, the heavenly life here below. The Bible says, "For he hath raised us up, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." The way to live on earth, according to many, is to live on earth, but to look upward to heaven. That is a good way of living, but I will tell you a better, and that is to live in heaven, and look down on earth. The Apostle had learned that when he said, "Our conversation is in heaven." It is good to be on earth, and look up to heaven; it is better for the mind to be in heaven, and to look down upon earth. May we learn that secret. The Lord lead us into it. Then when faith is strong, and love is ardent, and hope is bright, we shall sing, with Watts:--

"The men of grace have found

Glory begun below;

Celestial fruits on earthly ground

From faith and hope may grow."

The Lord grant you a participation in this bliss, beloved, and an abundant entrance into that bliss for ever, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

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