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Sermon Notes

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## **“Much More” Heaven on Earth**

### **Romans 5:9-11**

#### I. Assurance: Tasting Heaven While on Earth

##### A. The Puritans on Assurance

- “Assurance is glory in the bud; it is the suburbs of paradise.” Thomas Brooks
- “I am wholly His; I am peculiarly His; I am universally His; I am eternally His.” Thomas Brooks
- “It is the very drift and design of the whole Scripture, to bring souls first to an acquaintance with Christ, and then to an acceptance of Christ, and then to build them in a sweet assurance of their actual interest in Christ.” Thomas Brooks

##### B. Thomas Brooks: *Heaven on Earth*

“To be in a state of true grace is to be miserable no more; it is to be happy forever. A soul in this state is a soul near and dear to God. It is a soul much beloved, and very highly valued of God. It is a soul housed in God. It is a soul safe in everlasting arms. It is a soul fully and eminently interested in all the highest and noblest privileges. The being in a state of grace makes a man’s condition happy, safe, and sure; but the seeing, the knowing of himself to be in such a state, is that which renders his life sweet and comfortable. The being in a state of grace will yield a man a heaven hereafter, but the seeing of himself in this state will yield him both a heaven here and a heaven hereafter; it will render him doubly blest, blest in heaven and blest in his own conscience.”

##### C. Paul’s Goal: “Much More Assurance”

1. Gospel: justification by faith alone
2. Concerns about the present: “I’m convinced it’s all true... but how do I know if I personally have been saved?”
3. Concerns about the future: “How do I know I won’t fall away at some point in the future and be lost eternally? How do I know I won’t suffer the wrath of God in hell forever and ever?”

4. Paul's efforts in Romans 5:1-11... to give us assurance, and then to give us "much more" assurance

#### D. Why is Assurance Important?

1. Salvation itself: You might not be a Christian! Proper Biblical grounds should be taught
2. Present joy & peace: assurance is a good gift from a good God... He wants us to enjoy perfect peace and joy
3. Fruitfulness: if our conscience is troubled and we fear for our souls, we will be much less fruitful for Christ; if we have full assurance, we will be MUCH MORE fruitful, more impervious to the devil's accusations, bolder in evangelism. Also, our good works will be done absolutely for right motives... no hidden desire to use good works as payment for sin
4. Glory to God: assurance glorifies God, as we shall see... full assurance comes only from total lack of trust in ourselves and total boasting in God

## II. Context: More Links in the Chain

### A. The Unbreakable Chain of Seven Links

John MacArthur: isolated six great links in an unbreakable chain of assurance here in Romans 5:1-11; I added one

1. Peace with God
2. Standing in grace
3. Hope of glory
4. Tribulations producing proven character
5. Spirit-poured love
- 6. Saved by His life**
- 7. Exulting in God**

### B. Steps to Assurance

1. Reasoned out in the mind
2. Worked out in the life
3. Poured out in the heart

Today: highest form of reasoned assurance... Paul's "how much more" argument... Paul addresses the issue of the possibility of "falling away" from Christ

### III. Backdrop: Wrath & Reconciliation

Illus. Black velvet cloth on which to view diamonds

#### A. Worthless Assurance?

1. Universalistic tendencies
2. Weak views of hell
3. Inadequate views of heaven
4. Assurance not valued as a result

#### B. Wrath: A Biblical Reality

1. Clear in this passage

***"...how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him..."***

2. Clear earlier

***Romans 1:18 "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness."***

***Romans 2:5 "But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed."***

3. Clear in Christ's message

***Luke 12:4-5 "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. <sup>5</sup> But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him."***

4. Clear in Christ's death

***"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"***

### C. Liberalism: Denial of Wrath

1. God has no wrath toward sinners... only love
2. Our greatest need: simply to know that God loves us and to stop feeling bad in His presence
3. Summation of liberal “gospel”

H. Richard Niebuhr, 1937, The Kingdom of God in America, “A God without wrath brought men without sin into a Kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.”

### D. Reconciliation: Our Changed Relationship

1. What we were to God: helpless, ungodly, sinners, enemies
2. What God was to us: absolute authority we HATED

***Romans 8:7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.***

***Ephesians 2:1-3 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature [children] of wrath.***

“Children of wrath” = totally characterized by whatever promotes the wrath of God

3. Greatest need: reconciliation with God

***2 Corinthians 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.***

4. Now: we have been **reconciled**
  - a. note passive: we “have been” reconciled... something God did
  - b. done through death of Christ

***vs. 10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!***

5. Full extent of reconciliation not yet seen

- a. from enemies to friends
- b. actually “much more” than friends

***Romans 8:14-16 “...those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.”***

These two aspects give full and perfect backdrop to the logic of assurance: previously “children of wrath”, presently “children of God”

#### IV. “Much More” Assurance

##### A. Sanctified Logic

1. Reason and faith are friends
2. Faith accepts spiritual facts as absolute truths
3. Reason extends and connects these facts

##### B. From the Greater to the Lesser

1. Basic logic... if someone can do a very hard thing, how much more can he do an easier thing?
2. If a man can win an Olympic gold medal in power lifting, will he not MUCH MORE be able to pick up his two year-old son?
3. Paul’s frequent use

***Romans 8:32 “He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not along with Him graciously give us all things?”***

4. Jesus used it too

***Matthew 7:11 “If you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask Him?”***

##### C. Overview of argument

- Apart from Christ, we were helpless, ungodly sinners, enemies against God

- At that time, when we were at our worst, God gave His ultimate gift, His only begotten Son, Jesus
- Through Jesus bloody death, God's righteous wrath against our sins has been completely removed
- With God's wrath removed, God was free to be reconciled to us and to welcome us as friends; we have peace with Him and He is our friend
- Therefore, if a dead Jesus could do all this for rebellious enemies, how much more can a living resurrected Lord preserve, protect, and defend us through the rest of our lives, now that we are His friends

Argument from the greater to the lesser: If a dead Jesus justified enemies, how much more will a living Jesus will keep friends safe

#### D. The "Much More" Argument Illustrated

Illus. Viet Nam: an American soldier fighting near Da Nang in 1971 hears the cries of a little boy in a bungalow; despite the terrifying noise of battle and the horror of the firefight with the enemy, the soldier makes a heroic effort, risking his life to rescue this boy; while doing so, the soldier is wounded seriously, but still manages to carry the boy to safety. He keeps up with the boy upon finding out that he became an orphan during that battle; they develop a relationship, and the soldier sets his love upon the boy. After paying various agencies exorbitant fees, after pulling in every IOU he can, he manages to take this boy out of Viet Nam, he settles him in his own home as his adopted son. A year later, his adopted son looks up at him and says, "Daddy, will I still be with you next year?"

Can you imagine this man refusing the request? He who risked his life in a savage battle to save this boy when he was a total stranger to him, who paid a huge amount of money to get him out of Viet Nam, who went through all the legal channels to have him adopted, who set him up in his own home as his son, will he not MUCH MORE keep loving him through next year and beyond?

#### E. Past Justification Guarantees Future Salvation

##### 1. Salvation is a process: Past, Present, Future

###### a. PAST: "have been saved..."

***Ephesians 2:8 "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith..."***

Specifically refers to our justification... the moment we first trusted Christ, we were justified

***vs. 9 "Since we have now been justified by His blood..."***

- Christ's blood atoned for God's righteous wrath against our sins
- Christ's blood poured out on the cross removed forever the death penalty we all deserved
- Christ's blood also procures our reconciliation... our being brought into a right relationship with God

**vs. 10** *"...we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son" "... having been reconciled"*

b. PRESENT "are being saved..."

**1 Corinthians 1:18** *"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."*

**Philippians 2:12** *"...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling"*

This is SANCTIFICATION... saved day after day from the daily practice of sin; daily growing in holiness in obedience to Christ by the power of the Spirit; the topic of Romans 6-8!!

c. FUTURE "will be saved..."

**vs. 9** *"how much more WILL WE BE SAVED from God's wrath through him"*

- No true child of God will suffer His wrath... wrath already poured out on Christ at the cross!!
- No true child of God will be thrown in the fiery lake of burning sulfur
- No true child of God will be thrown into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth

This is salvation on Judgment Day; it is also our perfection in Christ, our GLORIFICATION

2. Paul's argument here: Past justification GUARANTEES Future salvation

a. God doesn't start things He can't finish

**Philippians 1:6** *"...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*

b. God justified you when you trusted Christ

Justification = final declaration of not guilty based on the righteousness of Christ

Justified sinners have already had their Judgment Day!!!

- c. if you have been justified in the past, you will be saved on Judgment day in the future

## V. Saved By His Life

**vs. 10** *“For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.”*

A. Strongest Assurance: Christ is Alive

1. Not Christ’s sinless, miracle-working life
2. Christ’s resurrected life!!

B. Possible Meaning: Christ Alive FOR Me

1. Christ as intercessor

**Romans 8:34** *Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*

If a dead Christ, hanging on the cross, reconciled enemies to God, HOW MUCH MORE will a living Christ interceding at the right hand of God for you finish your salvation

2. Christ as protector

**Romans 8:35** *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?*

**John 10:27-28** *My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.*

C. Best Meaning: Christ Alive IN Me

1. Sanctification is the growing impact of Christ living in you

**Romans 8:9-10** *You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.*

**Galatians 2:20** *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*



2. Ongoing life changes bears good fruit

***John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."***

3. Good fruit is pleasing to God, our lives ever more attractive to Him, not less
4. Christ living in us is GREAT ASSURANCE of final and total salvation

## VII. We Exult in God

***vs. 11 Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.***

- A. End Result of Salvation: Eternal Worship for God

Piper quote: "Missions exist because worship doesn't"

***John 4:23-24 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."***

- B. True Test of Doctrine: God Gets All the Glory, We Get Unlimited Joy

1. Word means "boast" "exult"
2. Our boast was in our own capabilities
3. Now, we boast in God

***1 Corinthians 1:30-31 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. <sup>31</sup> Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."***

4. All salvation to the praise of His glory

***Ephesians 1:4-6 In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.***

God gets eternal praise and glory for our salvation... we get the eternal pleasure of seeing Him face to face!!

### C. Complete Transformation

1. The God we once hated, we now exult in
2. Ourselves we once boasted in, now we utterly reject and despise
3. Our joy is eternal, our praise is too!!
4. Result: songs, hymns, spiritual songs forever and ever

***O for a thousand tongues to sing***

***My great Redeemer's Praise***

***The glories of my God and King***

***The triumph of His Grace!!!***

Application:

#### **Christian...**

Know how certain is your final salvation!!! If you are justified today, you will be saved from final condemnation of hell and brought to eternal glory in heaven

There you will see God face to face and worship Him in glory forever and ever!!

Rejoice and live with MUCH MORE heaven on earth!!!

#### **Non-Christian**

Come to Christ today... no longer under the wrath and curse of God

No longer will you be God's enemy and God be yours

Be reconciled to God!!