

Spiritual Perfection By Transformation Into the Body of His Glory

Phil. 3:11-21

Introduction:

1. In Phil. 3:12, 15 Paul refers twice to becoming perfect. The word that he uses is from the *teleios* word family, meaning complete, or reaching maturity.
2. He indicates that he has not obtained perfection, but presses on.
3. It appears in the text that the perfection he presses toward is not faultlessness, but the resurrection from the dead (3:11). Only then will what he is pressing for be fully realized.
4. "Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude." Let us press on following his example and walking according to the pattern we have in the faithful and not walk like those who are enemies of the cross of Christ.
5. "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."
6. There are three kinds of perfection.
 - a. There is the perfection achieved by forgiveness.
 - b. The perfection achieved by constantly putting to death the deeds of the body.
 - c. The perfection realized in the resurrection.
7. In this lesson we will focus on this last one.

Discussion:

I. Observations about Phil. 3:11ff.

A. The people of God are waiting for a transformation (*metaschēmatizō*, 21).

1. The word means to change or to fashion.
2. The people of God are waiting to be changed.
3. The Thessalonians had turned from idols to serve a true and living God and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead (1 Thess. 1:9-10).
It is interesting that in both these passages there is an association between the wait and resurrection.
4. The theme of waiting is seen in the parable of the ten virgins who were waiting for the bridegroom (Matt. 25:1ff).
5. Thus there is a future element to this perfecting. Although we have been raised in baptism and are putting to death the deeds of the body there is yet a

transformation

promised.

B. It will occur when our Savior returns.

1. Ties in with ancient Jewish wedding custom of bridegroom going away and then returning after preparing a place for the bride (Jn. 14:1-6).
2. Although we do not know when this will be it is necessary to be prepared (Matt. 24:36ff; 25:1ff) and to faithfully serve the Master until He returns (Matt. 24:45ff; 25:14ff). In Matt. 25:31ff he is "the King." There is an association with His

Kingship (Cf. “savior” also. Caesar Augustus was known as “savior.”). Note “the Lord Jesus Christ” (“anointed,” Phil. 3:20).

- C. It occurs by means of His power (v. 21).
 - 1. He has all authority. Only one enemy is yet to be conquered—death (1 Cor. 15:22-26).
 - 2. It is by the authority of the King that the transformation occurs.
- D. We will be conformed to the body of His glory (v. 21).
 - 1. “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see

Him

- just as He is” (1 Jn. 3:2-3).
- 2. There is a certain level of mystery about it.

II. The transformation is described in greater length and in other language in 1 Cor. 15.

- A. The gospel accounts give us little information about the resurrected body of Christ.
 - 1. He was recognizable. Vanished from their sight (Lk. 24:31).
 - 2. He ate (Lk. 24:43).
 - 3. He had evidence of pierced side and the print of the nails in His hand (Jn. 20:27).
 - 4. He entered a room the doors being shut (Jn. 20:26).
 - 5. Is this the kind of “body of glory” referred to in Phil. 3?
- B. 1 Cor. 15 gives information about our resurrection, but it is still mysterious.
 - 1. Paul uses the illustration of a seed and the plant it produces. They are quite different from one another.
 - 2. He contrasts the flesh of men, the flesh of beasts, birds and fish to illustrate the contrast of our earthly body and our heavenly body (38-40).
 - 3. He contrasts the glory of the sun, the moon, and the stars to illustrate the difference (41).
 - 4. He continues in verses 42ff to try to describe the contrast.
 - 5. In verses 50ff he contrasts the perishable and the imperishable. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, but that is all I know. I have never had an imperishable body. I don’t know what it is like.
 - 6. Paul helps me, but I still do not understand it!

III. Rom. 8:18-30 refers to the transformation as the redemption of our body and the hope of salvation.

- A. The creation was subjected to futility and corruption (20-21).
- B. And so suffers the “pains of childbirth until now” (22).
- C. We are waiting eagerly the redemption of our body (v. 24).
- D. We wait eagerly for it (v. 25).

IV. Each of these passages leaves us eager to know more. We long for the fulfillment of the final perfection even though it is mysterious to us. What actions should we take? What should we do? In light of the promised transformation. . .

- A. Rom. 8:25—with perseverance we should wait for it. We should not grow weary and loose hope because it is delayed, but wait expectantly for the Lord's return.
- B. Phil. 3:17-20—live with minds set on heavenly things (Phil. 3:17-20). Walk not as enemies of the cross of Christ, but according to the pattern evident in Paul and Timothy.
- C. 1 Cor. 15:58—be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.
- D. 1 Thess. 5:4-11; Heb. 10:23-25—be alert and sober and encourage one another.

Conclusion:

1. There are many things that I do not know about this state of perfection.
2. It is more glorious than I can imagine.
3. I know that it involves being with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:17). I know that death will be no more. There will be no more mourning or crying or pain (Rev. 21:4).
4. I do not know what this final state of perfection will be like. I have never experienced it. But with eagerness I wait for it and pray that the day come quickly (Rev. 22:7, 12, 20).