

Bible Basics Conference 2010: Results of Christ's Death

Part 11

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[00:00:01] We want to continue this afternoon with a conference theme which is results of Christ's death, some of the results flowing out from the death of the Lord Jesus. And we were occupied with some of those results yesterday. And the blessings that we were hearing about on the past day were all blessings that reach us as individuals. Blessings that every one [00:01:03] of us need in order that we might stand in the presence of God, that we might be at rest there, that we might know liberty there. But individual blessings are not all that the Lord Jesus had before him when he went to the cross. Well, we are going to speak about the fact that in going into death, the Lord Jesus also had before him that he might gather together into one the children of God who were scattered abroad. We can think of the standing [00:02:13] witness to the nation of Israel which were the twelve loaves that were set down upon the table of showbread in the tabernacle. And God's primary thought in connection with the nation of Israel was not that they were one nation but that through them the earth should be administered by the twelve tribes of Israel to the glory of God. And we know that in the world to come this [00:03:02] will happen. But when we think of the standing symbol of the assembly, we think of the one loaf. Not twelve loaves as in the case of Israel but one loaf. And that one loaf speaks of the unity of the spiritual body of the Lord Jesus, the assembly. And we have in a way these two thoughts in Matthew chapter 13. Somebody yesterday made reference to the parable of the treasure. [00:04:07] And the treasure, the various pieces, the various different pieces that together made up the treasure represent each of us as individuals. Each of us as valued by the Lord Jesus. Each of us as individuals for whom the Lord Jesus gave himself. But as you well know, there is also the parable of the pearl. This one pearl that was of great price to the goodly merchantmen that sought it.

[00:05:02] And the goodly merchantmen of course is a figure of our Lord Jesus Christ who went down beneath the waves of God's judgment in order that that one pearl might be his. Now believers have always had life. One could not be a true believer in any dispensation without having life communicated to the soul by God. But it isn't by possessing life that this unity that the Lord Jesus desired [00:06:10] that there might be is brought about. There is only one way that this unity was brought about and that was by the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell believers on the day of Pentecost when the body of Christ was first formed. The body of Christ had no existence before the day of Pentecost apart from, if you like, having an existence in the purpose of God. And as we begin

our subject, one of the most striking things that we have to realise [00:07:07] is that though the body is one and has many members, but all the members of the body being many are one body, so also is the Christ. And this, I think, is a unique statement.

I hope brethren will correct me if I'm wrong. But in this verse, the Christ represents the Lord Jesus united to his spiritual body on earth by the Spirit. We are so completely identified with him that we are included in this description, the Christ. And how astonishing [00:08:24] this fact is. It is a fact. And I think it's a fact that we do well to ponder because I'm sure as we do so it will speak to our hearts and to our consciences. In other words, what is to be seen in the body on earth are the features of the head in heaven. We, his body [00:09:09] with him, make one complete whole, one spiritual entity. And I find my heart challenged as to the extent in which this is seen in my life, day by day. Do people really see Christ in me? Or do they see features that have no business in the body of Christ? So the Holy Spirit has come and by indwelling all believers, he has formed this one body. And [00:10:04] we can say in relation to the verse in 1 Corinthians 12, first of all, by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, the we all is all believers. It isn't an elite class of believers.

It isn't believers who practically have attained to a certain degree of sanctification or practical consistency with the truth that is revealed in scripture. No, because it is by the indwelling [00:11:01] of the Holy Spirit every believer is part of this one spiritual body of the Lord Jesus on earth. We are baptised into one body. And the idea of baptism is that there is a burial.

And certain things are to go out of sight. There are certain things that are not to be seen anymore. And the things that are to go out of sight in connection with our baptism by the Spirit into one body are all those things that would militate against the unity of the body. And in the verse there are two things in particular that are referred to [00:12:05] and they are national and social differences. These are not to be seen. These are not to impact in any way upon the expression of the unity of the one body of Christ. And we're all made to drink into one Spirit. Baptism is something outward. The imbibing of the Spirit, the drinking into one Spirit is something inward. And God is not content with what is [00:13:02] outward merely. He would produce this unity in our hearts. So it's not a feigned unity. It's not something that we find extremely difficult to maintain an appearance of because it's a real unity. It's an inward unity produced by the Spirit of God. All made to drink into one Spirit. And here it seems to me is another challenge for us in our day. We know that the church, the assembly is terribly fragmented in its testimony. But we also know that because [00:14:02] the body of Christ has been formed by the coming of the Holy Spirit that the unity of the body is never destroyed. Despite the fact that the Christian testimony is so broken. Yet this unity of the body continues to exist. It continues to exist in the sight of God and we are still in our day to conduct ourselves in ways that are consistent with the truth of the unity of the body. And we know from Ephesians, for example, that we are to endeavour to use diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace. It carries [00:15:02] deeply practical implications for us as to the way that we behave towards one another, the way that we treat one another and that point was well made yesterday.

I've spoken about unity, the word in the title bar showing our subject speaks of union.

The union of the body is with the Lord Jesus, its head in the assembly, its head in heaven.

And in Ephesians 1 verse 23 we read that his body is the fullness of him that filleth all in all. [00:16:05] And here again this is a most remarkable statement because it's telling us that the Lord Jesus as a man is incomplete without the assembly, without his body.

And that his spiritual body on earth is his fullness or complement. So that if all that he is as man is going to be expressed as God wants all that he is as man to be expressed, his body is vital to this. And we know that the fullness that is in him as man will be [00:17:13] expressed and will be fully seen in the world to come. In Ephesians chapter 1 just a verse or two above verse 23 there is a reference to the world to come. And that will be when Christ takes possession of his inheritance. When as man he takes possession of everything that he created as God. And we will take possession with him and his glory will be seen, [00:18:12] will be set forth by those who are his own, the members of his body. We thought of the fact that by the spirit of God his body is united to him. And it is a fact that we will never be more united to Christ than we are now. 1 Corinthians 6 verse 17 tells us that he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

[00:19:17] And we can think of those verses in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 that tell us that no one knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him. There are certain things which I could tell you about myself. There are certain things that my wife and family could tell you about me. But if you had my spirit you would know everything that there is to know about me. And as you know in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 Paul goes on to say that God wants us to know the things that are freely given to us of him. And in order that we might do so he's given [00:20:05] us his spirit. But here we find that we're joined unto the Lord by the spirit and that we can know everything about him as man. We can enter into his thoughts, we can enter into his feelings as we read the word of God. And the Holy Spirit, the spirit of Christ will bring these things before us. In Ephesians 5 this truth is described as a great mystery. I speak concerning Christ and the assembly. And we know that a mystery isn't something that in the conventional sense of the [00:21:04] word is a mystery to us today. It's something that was hidden but is now revealed first of all to the apostles and prophets and through them to us in the scriptures. And the truth of Christ and the assembly is one of the two mysteries that is called in scripture a great mystery. And the other great mystery is the mystery of godliness which speaks of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus. But Christ and the assembly, the truth of Christ and the assembly, the truth of Christ and his body is a great mystery. It's great because it's God's masterpiece. There is nothing in which all the treasures of God's knowledge and wisdom are so set forth [00:22:09] as in relation to the assembly, this one entity that is joined to the Lord Jesus by the Spirit so that together they can be referred to as the Christ. The union of Christ and the assembly is a pattern for marriage as Ephesians 5 shows us and we've already considered the fact that in fact our union with Christ is more intimate than any natural marriage can be because we have his spirit. And the assembly, the body and bride of Christ of course, is the object of Christ's present care and future delight. [00:23:08] We are going to be with the Lord Jesus in heaven. This mystery is going to be manifested in glory and God would make known to us now what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles which is Christ in you the hope of glory and perhaps this verse requires a little further explanation. We have the Lord Jesus in us now as life. We referred to that at the beginning of this session and this life is the life of Christ and as such it's a life that isn't at home here. [00:24:09] It's a life that can only be at home in glory and the reason it can only be at home in glory is because it's a glorious life. We were thinking yesterday about the fact that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God but this life, this life that we have, the life of Christ is a glorious life and belongs there. That is its proper home and our being there with him, the hope of glory, is a proper Christian hope. A hope that we know will be realised at the coming of the Lord Jesus for us. [00:25:03] So we have this wonderful hope and we know that our bodies will be made fit for heaven. They will be made suitable suitable for heaven when we are changed at the Lord's coming for us. When there will be that exercise of divine power in relation to our bodies and he will change or transform our body of humiliation into conformity to his body of glory so that we shall be like him then. [00:26:02] He won't be ashamed of us and yet the the glory that will light us, if you like, is his glory.

He comes, our bodies are changed and then sometime afterwards after we've all appeared before the the judgment seat of Christ and so on, after those events that are to take place in heaven, after the marriage supper of the Lamb, when he is manifested we shall be manifested with him in the same glory. And I might say in relation to the marriage supper of [00:27:08] the Lamb that as a consequence of the marriage supper of the Lamb, as I said earlier on, we won't be more united to the Lord Jesus than we are now. That is not possible. But that marriage supper will be a celebration of the union that exists and we know that concerning ourselves at that time all taint of sin shall be removed, all evil done away and we shall realise that union with Christ in a much deeper, in a much fuller way than we do while we are down here. So that this hope that we have in him as 1 John 3 2-3 shows us is to have [00:28:09] a present moral effect upon us. Our bodies are going to be changed at the coming of the Lord but this hope that we have in him is to affect us now morally. It should bring about a moral change and I'm going to absolutely fly through my remaining points because I don't want to be rightly ticked off by any of the dear brothers down there. 2 Corinthians 3 brings before us that process by which we are changed morally and it is by beholding the glory of the Lord. The chapter shows us that there is nothing between us and him. There was a veil on the face of Moses when he came down out from the presence of God [00:29:02] into the camp of the children of Israel. They couldn't look on his face because it shone with the glory of God and he had to cover his face. But there is no veil on the face of the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit would so occupy our hearts with him that we are transformed inwardly and we are changed from glory because it is Christ in glory that is our object and this transformation continues until we are in glory with him. And now I've done something astonishing which I think means we've come to the end of this talk.