

**Reading:** Romans 8:18-39

**Theme:** The Hope of the Glory of God.

I guess we have all had events in our lives that we have eagerly looked forward to - for many here it would be our marriages, or before that, a date, or over the years the holidays that we anticipated, or maybe knew a surprise was coming or special birthday treat but didn't know what... There was a great sense of anticipation, of growing excitement at what we would be and happen. This is what Paul expresses here in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of Romans 5v2 where we will see the 3<sup>rd</sup> immediate consequence or fruit of justification by faith. 1stly we saw that we have **Peace with God**; 2ndly that we are **Placed in the Standing of Grace** - a secure position and then **3rdly The Prospect of the Future Glory**. This is our subject we are focusing on this evening.

As believers we not just to consider what has been done (*as beneficial as that is*), nor just on what is being done (*as thrilling as that is*), but we are to also look ahead as to what will be done for and in us. Every area of our Christian life is to be regarded with amazement and wonder. All that has gone in us and outside of us in the courtroom of heaven; our introduction, presentation into this grace in which we now securely and safely stand are reasons to rejoice and thank God for, but Paul says here in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of v2 "*we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*" - not we shall, nor that we should be rejoicing, but we are and continue to rejoice, we are rejoicing now and in the future we will continue to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 3 headings to open it up:

### **1. Our Expectation.**

In earlier chapters, Paul wrote of what we were and we were shown all fall short of the glory of God, all have sinned and therefore all deserve God's wrath and punishment i.e. the just outworking of the offended glory of God. Nothing should be more feared than falling into the hands of the angry God of all glory. That was, is our position

by nature, by birth and nothing we could do could change that. Yet in our salvation all that has gloriously changed - being justified we are at peace with God, reconciled, no longer will we meet this God in His anger and holy justice against us, but all has been justly sorted in Christ; in and through Him we are removed out of condemnation and stand securely in the condition and state of grace. So, we can anticipate, eagerly look forward to with great expectation, of the hope of the glory of God.

The word “hope” is not some wishy-washy, vague notion or idea but it means expectation, a joyful and confident expectation, looking forward to... The idea of a marriage is a good one - the expectation, anticipation of the bride and groom and it increases the nearer the marriage date gets. It is not the expectant dread of a dentist visit or a major operation, but it is a joyful hope and so we “rejoice in the hope”.

All our Lord has done for us in our salvation is wonderful, is amazing. In this life we know so many blessings, joys and delights, but as Wesley said on his deathbed “*all this and heaven too!*” As believers there is so more to come for us. We have changed our state and position - we were strangers, enemies to God, now we are God’s children, His beloved children, but there is still much more to come and we should have an anticipation, an expectation of it and not having a dread, fear, an uncertainty and wavering about what will occur. We will move on to look at what our expectation is to be focused on:

## **2. Our Experience.**

I’m using this heading “*our experience*” because it is not something purely academic and irrelevant to us in our everyday lives, but is something we have and are to have a personal interest in as Christians for it is to be personally experienced and enjoyed. The words “*the glory of God*” are not just some nice words, but a part

and parcel of our Christian experience and will be experienced personally and fully by all those who are born again of God, all who have trusted the Lord Jesus as their own Saviour, are justified by faith, have peace with God and are standing in this grace. Only such ones can joyfully anticipate, with expectation the glory of God experienced in full and that is our focus here. So, what then is “the glory of God”? What will our experience be? It includes 2 aspects - ***Seeing and Being***:

**A. Seeing:** we are to remember that at a point in our life history and experience we shall see the glory of God. Matthew 5:8 “*Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.*” What an exciting thing to anticipate, to have an expectation of and then to actually see God – the vision of God in all His glory and majesty; in His beauty and splendour i.e. the Beatific Vision. Here is the objective realisation of our salvation that we will see Him as He is and be in His presence.

This includes, is tied into seeing the glory of the Lord Jesus. In John 17:24 Jesus desired this for the likes of you when me! “*Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, **and to see my glory**, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.*” Are we looking forward to this with a longing, expectation and anticipation?

I wonder what this meant to Paul? Did Paul really have any idea of what he was writing of? I think so! In fact, I know he did. The first recorded Christian contact he had was in Acts 7:55 - with a man called Stephen and it is recorded of Stephen as he is about to be stoned to death, that Stephen is taken up with the glory of God. Yet Paul also personally met the glorified Saviour a short time later on the road to Damascus and such a dazzling, glorious vision caused him to ask “*Who are you Lord?*” Paul also wrote that he had been taken up into the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven and had seen things so glorious he was not permitted to write of them (2 Corinthians 12:5). Yes, Paul

certainly knew what he wrote of and it thrilled him, excited him and moved him. He knew also that we now see this glory darkly as in a glass, but one day we will see Jesus face-to-face, with no veil in-between.

Some of the other apostles also had glimpses of this awesome glory - Peter, James and John there on the Mount of Transfiguration and what a glimpse of the glory of the Lord Jesus they saw and it affected them. Peter wrote about it years later in 2 Peter 1:16 *“We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were **eye-witnesses of his majesty.**”* John wrote of beholding the glory of the only begotten of the Father. Yet John also experienced the sight of this glory of God and the Lord Jesus as an old man and we read of it in Revelation 1 - where he turned to see the one who spoke to him writes: *“I turned round to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone “like a son of man”, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash round his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.”* (Revelation 1:12-16) and John fell down as a dead man at the awesome sight of such glory.

That awesome sight, that Beatific vision of the glory of God and the Lord Jesus is set before us as believers. That is what we shall personally see, gaze at, behold and we will do so with delight; doing so lost in wonder love and praise. What an experience to anticipate – see, behold and gaze upon the glory of God in Christ, with no barriers in between, no hindrances outside of us or within us to prevent us delighting, enjoying and contemplating such a sight. We could never do so apart from the work of the Lord Jesus in His saving

us. If we were outside of Christ, that Beatific vision would be an awesome terror - like walking into one of the blast furnaces say at Scunthorpe or Sheffield and thinking that because we had a good high factor suntan lotion on, we will be okay, but it would be useless! The only way we can be there and to anticipate it with joy is to have trusted the Lord Jesus as our own Saviour.

All who will appear before God one day will do so with either extreme joy or extreme terror and it will depend on whether or not they have trusted the Lord Jesus as their own Saviour. There is to be in our experience **seeing** of the glory of God, but also:

**B. Being:** while “*seeing and being*” sound so good together, I feel I need to explain what I mean by that “*sound bite*”. We, in our salvation, are made fit and able to stand there and to see the glory of God. We will be able to gaze on the glory that angels admire and yet shield themselves from. We are going to be there in heaven and for eternity be in the presence of the glory of God in the Lord Jesus, but seeing Him is going to transform us. Yes, we are saved, yes, we will be free from sin, but there is still a transformation that will occur when we see our Saviour - as John expresses in 1 John 3:1-2 “*when we see Him, we shall be like Him*”. Our experience of the glory of God is not only seeing, but partaking - being personally partakers of such glory.

This is guaranteed by our justification and it is not in doubt - Romans 8:30 “*those He justified, He also glorified*”. Not will or may glorify, but glorified - Paul uses the aorist tense that emphasises and underlines that it is done and continues to be so. Paul also writes Romans 8:18 “*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*” It is so amazing that God’s glory will be revealed not only to us, not only through us, but in us and all creation waits in eager anticipation of

this to be revealed (8:19). We as God's children wait for this, our final seal of adoption.

The Romans had 2 adoption processes or recognition processes – in 1<sup>st</sup> a person was taken as a child and legally adopted, owned as a son or daughter. Then 2<sup>ndly</sup> when they had grown, they are taken to say the Senate or a local council chamber and presented with glory and honour before all e.g. as in Ben Hur. At the moment we are adopted, loved as God's children as believers, but one day, one amazing day all creation will see us publicly, joyfully owned and glorified as God's children, being partakers of God's glory and honour.

On that wonderful day, every taint, hindrance, deformity and influence of sin will be removed from us - not just in our souls, but in our very resurrection bodies also. There will be no more sickness, pain, death, tears, no effects of sin at all. There we will be clothed with perfect, sinless resurrection bodies and these bodies of ours, which are so wonderful now, but at the same time so frail and prone to weakness and sin, will be changed to be like His glorious body. Those Christians alive will be transformed in the twinkling of an eye, those Christians who are dead will be raised up, have resurrection bodies and together we will go to meet the Lord in the air and to be with Him in His glorious presence for ever.

We are not to lose sight of the resurrection of the body. We will not be as bodiless souls for ever, but in our flesh, we shall see our Redeemer lives, with our own eyes we shall see Him - seeing and being is to be our experience and our expectation. At that time, we will see Him and be like Him, yet we are already in that process, an ongoing process within us now as we are "*changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place*". While we are on earth, this process is called sanctification by which we become more and more Christ like in all we are, do and say, but one day, in an instant we will be perfect.

We may be wanting to buy something and people have the product we want and they want to sell it to us. They present their marketing spiel, arguments and case and may say, as they try and close the deal, “*How does that sound?*” They want us to make a decision on what we have seen and heard. I’m not trying to sell you anything this evening, but how does what I have presented sound? Does it seem too good to be true? Is it irrelevant? Is it something boring? Maybe it sounds too amazing? As we consider such things, it should affect us and Paul had already told his first readers how it should affect us and yet I’ve left it to last to drive it home and so see:

### **3. Our Exultation.**

We are to rejoice. The word *καυχῶμαι* used for rejoice is a much stronger word than the English translation “rejoice” implies. Charles Hodge says that the word *καυχῶμαι* “*is one of Paul’s favourite terms. It properly means to talk of oneself, to praise oneself, to boast, then to congratulate oneself, to speak of ourselves as glorious or blessed; and then to felicitate (congratulate) ourselves in anything as a ground of confidence and a source of honour and blessedness.*” Basically, it means to glory, boast, make boast of or rejoice. In Romans 2:17 it is used and translated in NIV as “brag” and as “boast” in other versions. That adds a new force to the phrase - “*and we brag, boast in, of the hope of the glory of God*”. One lad in school and he and his family often went abroad in the 1970s and he liked rubbing it in, was always bragging of where they were going. One day one the other lads said in reply “*We are going to... and then going on to...*” It was all true - as his father worked in BOAC and had kept number of years flights to be able to take this huge holiday. It shut up the one who was boasting - for short while at least!

When you boast, brag, rejoice or exult in something, you are not half-hearted. Paul was a wholehearted man - he was before his conversion and he boasted of his righteousness, being fanatical about the Jewish

religion and exceedingly vigorous in his destroying Christians. Yet all that was counted as dung for the surpassing excellency of knowing Christ. Was he any less boastful, exultant about His Saviour? Not at all - he gloried in the cross, all the shame and suffering it conveyed; but surely, he boasted, exulted and rejoiced even more so in the hope of the glory of God. We too should rejoice, exult, boast, brag, tell everyone of its wonders and glories. We should be moved in our innermost beings and stirred by such a hope of glory. What we know now is wonderful, but what is to come is more wonderful. We have discovered, as we will shortly sing "*Glory begun below*". Again, we are presented with the assurance, the certainty the security of our salvation. Reinforced by words we sang earlier by John Kent says "*What from Christ that soul shall sever, bound by everlasting bands? Once in Him, in Him for ever, thus the eternal covenant stands: none shall pluck the from the Strength of Israel's hands.*" All this as we are making our way, marching to Zion.

With such a secure hope of glory set before us, why do we live as if Christ has not securely redeemed us and we have nothing to rejoice in? We are to live conscious of our position in Him. Sadly, we live with our eyes fixed on a fallen, fading and failing world, with our eyes on our feelings and circumstances. We do not see the weight of and the sight of glory being worked out for us above and beyond our trials and tribulations. We are to listen to Paul's arguments, God's promises and we are to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.