

Behold the Happiness of Those Espoused to Christ

by Thomas Shepard

The happiness of those espoused to Christ comes from their hopes being laid up in another world and their certain expectation of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Isaiah 25:8, Luke 12:37, Romans 8:24, 1 Corinthians 15:19, 1 Thessalonians 4:17, 1 John 3:2

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Christian Hope"

Description

Thomas Shepard preaches about the happiness of those who are espoused to the Lord Jesus, as their hopes are set on the second coming of Christ and the promises of the next life. Saints eagerly await the transformation of their bodies, the removal of sins, sorrows, shame, and the ultimate recompense for their labor of love. They anticipate being forever with the Lord, experiencing His glory and endless compassion, while the world faces judgment and despair. Shepard urges listeners to embrace Christ wholeheartedly, as the hope in Him brings certainty, glory, and unspeakable joy, contrasting the fate of those without hope.

Transcript

Hence behold the happiness of all them that be espoused to the Lord Jesus, in that their hopes are laid up in another world, at the day of the coming of the Lord Jesus. 1 Cor. 15:19, "If we had hope only in this life, we were of all men most miserable." Because none so foolish or so sensible of misery as they; but our hopes stretch to another life, to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Suppose a man had all the crowns of the world cast at his feet, but at last to be dragged before the judgment seat of Christ, and there to stand quaking, what should he be the better? What though saints have all the miseries in this world; but, at last, "with these eyes they shall see the Lord," and stand triumphing before him, and have a real sight and certain expectation of this. What people in the world so great as these!

Quest. What do they wait and expect for?

Ans. Great things, which may astonish the whole creation.

1. They look for him "to change their vile bodies that this their husband, at the marriage day, should take away these rags, and make them like unto his glorious body," brighter than the sun; so that burn them, cut them to pieces, they see Christ loves both, and hence holds sword and soul in one hand, and scabbard in another, etc.

2. They expect he should take away all their sins, and make them like unto himself; engrave on their souls perfectly his own image, that their enemies they feel now, they look they "shall never see them more." 1 John 3:2. And as no evil like it, no mercy like this; and no evil to saints like this, that yet they should grieve the heart of such a husband.

3. They look that he should take away all sorrows and tears from them; for this the Lord promiseth, and begins to execute now, but it shall be perfected then. Is. 25:8, 9. And hence called "the times of refreshing." Acts 3:19, 20. It is true, the spouse and church is now sorrowful to the very heart many times, but there is a time coming that they shall never sorrow more.

4. They look that he should take away all shame from them. For no people in the world is laden with more calumnies and reproaches by the wicked and by hypocrites, and hard speeches from the godly, and they doubt whether they be sons or no. Now, then the whole world shall see they are sons, and shall stand amazed at them, and shall not doubt of it, nor themselves; for the Lord shall proclaim it, and they shall hear, These are my jewels. And this they look for. 1 John 3:1,2.

5. They look for recompense to all their "labor of love" to him and his. Hence, (1 Cor. 15:58,) "Knowing your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Hence the apostle oft defers men for that recompense till now. "The Lord show mercy to the house Onesiphorus in that day." 2 Tim. 1:18. So that some heretics have thought souls sleep till then. They may pray, and no answer; seek to do good, and do none. O, but the Lord will recompense them abundantly.

6. They look then to "be ever with the Lord." 1 Thess. 4:17. Never to be parted from him, never to live without him; nay, never to go away from under his wing, out of his bleeding bosom of love and endless and unspeakable compassions any more. And being with him to see his glory, and never see the depth of it, and to have the Lord to serve them, (Luke 12:37,38,) and giving whatever they call for, and all this when thousands shall at this time be crying for a drop of water, and can not get it. Now, all this they look for, and more too. Which is, 1. Certain. For "hope maketh not ashamed." 2. Which fills their hearts with glory, and unspeakable glory, too; for it makes it so clear and certain that they have it all already; for though absent, hope makes it as present. Rom. 8:24. He doth not say we shall be, but "we are saved by hope." Faith takes hold on the beginning, hope on the end. O, the heavy wrath of God upon a world of poor, blind, ignorant men, that have no hope, no hope of Christ, no hope of glory, unless a flattering dead hope. What a sad thing is it to think, of a number of men that are buried in the world, and never to awaken until they see Christ in the clouds of heaven, coming to be revenged on them! O, methinks I see them falling down before the judgment seat, and crying out, O that we had known of this day! O, alas! that I had hope! but not such a hope, but am now deceived. O, it is otherwise with saints; they shall find what they hoped for, and infinitely more. What hurt can any do them? Let all the world come against them, their husband will come, and will kick them under his feet. Let them load them with reproaches, fill their hearts with sorrows and their eyes with tears, their Lord's coming will comfort them. Let Satan tempt, and a Father hide his face, behold, the Lord cometh, that shall deliver and redeem them. O, see their blessedness, and let it draw you to make up the match with Christ, that never did it yet. He has been wooing of you, longing for you, and you wooing of him again. Lord, take me. What hinders you, then, from striking the match and concluding it? To give thyself this day to him, and take him only, rejoice in him only, when nothing thou dost can be so pleasing to him. And now you may look and believe what one day you shall to your comfort feel. And account yourselves most wretched creatures until the Lord be pleased to espouse you to himself.

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