

SANCTIFIED SPIRITS WITH SKIN 1 THES 3:12-4:5, 13-14  
21st SUN. AFTER PENT./ALL SAINTS NOV. 2, 2014

Text is part of today's epistle, along with verses before & after  
<sup>3:12</sup> and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, <sup>13</sup> so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

<sup>1</sup> Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. <sup>2</sup> For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. <sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup> that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, <sup>5</sup> not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;

<sup>13</sup> But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

Let's start with being clear about point of All Saints Day.

It is time to remember those made holy,  
especially those now in heaven,  
so we remember to be like them, especially in having faith,  
which is what makes them holy.

As, for example St. Paul says in v. 1:

“you received from us how you ought to live and please God.”

So then, what is connection between All Saints

& rest of epistle reading about physical morality?

Maybe same as connection with verses before and after  
which are about Jesus return to take us to heaven.

In Bible, key to meaning is often in the context.

I think that meaning for us as we remember the saints,  
those who are sanctified, made holy by Jesus,  
has to do with connection between spirit & body for all of us.

Here is the key concept in all of this:

Our spirit and body are not two different things,  
like two pieces of paper stuck together,  
but one thing, like two sides of the same piece of paper.  
as Athanasian Creed: “rational soul & flesh is one man.”

So Paul writes at end of this letter (5:23):

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**BODIES WITH SPIRITS ARE TO BE SANCTIFIED  
SPIRITS WITH BODIES ARE SANCTIFIED IN HEAVEN  
WE ARE SANCTIFIED BY JESUS' DEEDS IN A BODY**

**BODIES WITH SPIRITS ARE TO BE SANCTIFIED**

<sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup> that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, <sup>5</sup> not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;

So, what's with these Gentiles who do not know God?

In Paul's day, most accepted Greek philosophy of dualism,  
people are made of two different things: body & spirit.

Spirit is good and important, body is not so much.

Similar idea is found in eastern religions, like Hinduism,  
goal is final freedom from the physical to be purely spiritual.  
In Greek and Roman world, idea that body didn't matter much  
led to two opposite philosophies.

One was harsh Spartan approach.

Don't bother with physical comforts and pleasures,  
don't worry about pains and hunger,  
because what happens to the body is not very important.

The other extreme was the hedonistic Epicurean approach.

Since body doesn't really matter, let it do whatever  
it feels like with food, drink & sex or whatever.

What Paul saw was - like rodents & bugs this time of year  
that don't just stay outside but try to come inside,  
these ideas found way into early Christian church  
and led to various ancient heresies.

First about Jesus, that he couldn't be both spiritual & holy God  
and a physical man at the same time,

he must have only appeared to be a man  
or else been a man that God just came into for a while.

But it also distorted ideas of what it means to be a Christian.

Some thought way to spiritual holiness was asceticism,  
harsh treatment of the body for the sake of spirit,  
Were hermits, wandering beggars, took vow of poverty.

Martin Luther bought into this when he first became a monk,  
thought long times of fasting & work can make more holy.  
On other hand, others acted as if, since body doesn't matter,  
Can do whatever you want physically, still be good Christian.  
Some Corinthians said "All things are permitted for me"  
because I have been set free by Christ.  
Paul had to warn the Corinthians against sexual immorality  
with reminder that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.  
In this letter also, he reminds that sanctification, holiness,  
includes treating the body as holy to God,  
not just allowing it to participate in sexual immorality,  
giving in to passion and lust like pagans,  
or, could have said, like animals who just follow instincts.  
but kept under control by power of Holy Spirit living in us.  
Again, like you can get rid of rodents  
and they keep trying to come back,  
same notions about body & spirit are not just ancient ideas  
but come back around today in new disguises.  
Again, modern culture acts as if is disconnect  
between body and spirit.  
Those whom God gives life in a male or female body  
may say that doesn't matter.  
I may have male body but I feel female or vice versa,  
and so I expect to be treated that way.  
But body does matter. Like little children who think they can sit  
in doll chair or shoe box when really their body is too big,  
we all have to come to realization of what kind of body  
God has given and what he has made us to be.  
Even Christians may be tempted to act as if  
revealing clothing or sexting pictures are no big deal  
or as if casual hook-ups, other intimacy outside marriage  
won't have a lasting effect on the core of our being,  
and don't have anything to do with our relationships  
with others, including God, But they do.  
God breathed life into body he formed  
so body & soul are one being. Be careful with all of it.  
OT had rules about what could be not be eaten or touched  
without making one unholy.  
NT makes clear these laws no longer apply to Christians,  
but they are reminder that what we do with our body  
is not disconnected from our spiritual life.

Paul in these verses does not get into the importance of healthy eating, exercise, adequate rest, good hygiene, but people have learned from experience that these things are influenced by and have an influence on mental & emotional wellbeing and spiritual life as well. God wants us to treat our bodies as holy, that is, special, and with a special purpose, Why are bodies so important? because being human is being body & spirit together, not just for now but forever.

### SPIRITS WITH BODIES ARE SANCTIFIED IN HEAVEN

<sup>3:13</sup> [may he] establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

<sup>4:13</sup> But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

God is holy, and no one not holy can survive in his presence.  
- more about how we get this holy in a little bit -  
but it is a great comfort for us that we will at last see Jesus, and not only that, that we will see those who have died and are now with him.

But what is it we will see?

Some people misunderstand Bible and think people who die turn into angels - spiritual beings without a body.

Even those who know better, still think of them as just spirits sitting on clouds or floating around somewhere.  
after all, the body is buried in the ground.

But Bible says those who are in heaven with God have a body, because human life is life with a body.

This is very mysterious & hard for us to understand because heaven is not only outside dimension of this place but outside dimension of this time.

But is not without reason we say in the creed we believe "in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting."

Here is the connection between sanctification in what we do with our body now and the saints in heaven.

This body is the same one that will be in heaven, totally remodeled & with dents removed, of course, but the me here is the me that will be in heaven.

This is why Christian burial customs show respect for the body.

It is not just something to just be disposed of as in cultures  
where it left to be eaten by birds & wild animals,  
but it is something we lay aside for now  
with expectation it will be taken up again on last day.  
This was unthinkable for Greek dualists and eastern religions  
whose goal is to be free of the body.  
This is why, when Paul was preaching in Athens,  
as soon as he mentioned Jesus' resurrection from dead,  
many turned their backs and walked away.  
Why would anyone want to get their body back?  
But Jesus' physical resurrection is essential  
to the holiness of the saints.

### WE ARE SANCTIFIED BY JESUS' DEEDS IN A BODY

<sup>1</sup> Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that  
as you received from us how you ought to live and to please God, just  
as you are doing, that you do so more and more. <sup>2</sup> For you know what  
instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

<sup>14</sup> For ... we believe that Jesus died and rose again

Notice how often Paul says, "in Jesus" or "through Jesus"  
Even though sentence can still make sense without them,  
These are not just incidental like way some people pray,  
throwing in "Father" or "Jesus" every few words.  
These references to Jesus are essential to the real meaning.  
All of this, our holiness in body and spirit here,  
and our presence with spirit and body in heaven,  
is connected to what Jesus did with his body.  
People don't just to go to heaven  
because that is what happens when people die.  
and they don't go to heaven because they did  
a good enough job of acting like saints on earth.  
People go to heaven only because of Jesus  
and they please God here on earth only because of Jesus.  
And it is because Jesus lived and died with a body.  
As letter to Hebrews says (10:10): we have been sanctified  
through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.  
Jesus saves us from our sins by dying for them in our place.  
So, we reject the ancient heresies about Jesus.  
If he wasn't a real human with a body, he couldn't die.  
At same time, he was genuinely God so his one death  
was enough to pay for the sins of the whole world.

He had to rise again from the dead with a real body,  
one his disciples could touch and feel,  
or he hadn't really defeated death for us.

As the misdeeds of our body share unrighteous with our spirit,  
and as new life of faith leads us to new bodies in heaven,  
because of Jesus' bodily death & resurrection  
his righteousness now is transferred to us.

One way he assures us of this is Holy Communion  
where he gives us his actual body and blood  
the same body that died for us on the cross  
to eat and to drink with our bodies  
as a way of giving us forgiveness of our sins.  
Yes, the body matters.

This forgiveness of sins from Jesus is what makes us saints.  
And being saints, made holy by God's grace through faith,  
is what makes us live sanctified lives in our body.

<sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, your sanctification: ...<sup>4</sup> that each one of  
you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor,

**BODIES WITH SPIRITS ARE TO BE SANCTIFIED together**  
because body & spirit are one person,  
all special to God. This is why..

**SPIRITS WITH BODIES ARE SANCTIFIED IN HEAVEN**  
As we celebrate the saints and follow in their footsteps  
we affirm our belief in the resurrection of the body.  
all because...

**WE ARE SANCTIFIED BY JESUS' DEEDS IN A BODY**  
His death and resurrection make all the difference for us  
and so we recognize that what we do in our body  
is an important part of being sanctified by him.