

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
^{3:12} and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, ¹³ 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.

¹ 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. ² For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;

¹³ 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. ¹⁴ 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

³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵ 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

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

^{4:13} 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. ¹⁴ 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

¹ 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. ² For you know what
instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

¹⁴ 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.

³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: ...⁴ 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.