

PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

“....we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.” —ROMANS 8:23

We have the intellectual, moral and social aspects of both the ‘now’ and the ‘not yet’ of the Christian experience. Added to this, are the physical and spiritual aspects.

Physically, in the ‘now’, our bodies are aging, decaying and will eventually die. We are told in Isaiah 53:4, “Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering,” and in verse 5, “By his wounds we are healed.” When speaking of the healing ministry of Jesus, Matthew quotes from Isaiah, saying, “This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases” (Matthew 8:17).

In the ‘not yet’, Jesus is the fulfillment of God healing our diseases and carrying our infirmities. Though it is true that God in His sovereignty will sometimes intervene with our illnesses, it is not a promise of Scripture. Our bodies are not redeemed in this life. As Christians, we anticipate the future, “when the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body” (Philippians 3:20-21). This transformation takes place in the ‘not yet’.

Lastly, in the spiritual area which is comprised of every believer in Christ is the perfection of Christ's church. As it is now, we are baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ. Paul speaks of the church in 1 Timothy 3:15 as "the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth." This is the 'now', but the church is not yet brought into perfection. The book of Revelation talks about the church becoming the bride of Christ. "For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready" (Revelation 19:7). "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb" (21:9), and in 22:17, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!'" The church will become the bride of Christ without blemish, and this, of course, has yet to come.

As Christians, Paul tells us in Romans 8:17 we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, which means we have something to inherit. Part of the Spirit's ministry is to direct our focus to the future, and know that whatever happens in this life, there is a perfect end that is coming. We have a reason to live in the 'now' with confidence, because the final chapter of God's story promises a new heaven and a new earth of which we will be a part.

PRAYER: Thank you, Lord, for the promise of an everlasting future with You. Help me to live every day with the eternal in mind.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I living with eternity in mind?