



THE BASICS OF THE ORTHODOX FAITH

Eternal life in unity with God and each other (Quotes)

In the Orthodox Christian understanding, eternal life is not just an endless continuation of existence but is defined by a profound and intimate communion with God and fellow believers. This communion is the ultimate goal of human life and is central to the Orthodox teaching of salvation, often referred to as theosis (deification). It is not just an everlasting duration, but a quality of life characterized by divine communion, love, and unity.

"Eternal life is to be with Christ, for where Christ is, there also is His Kingdom." St. John of Damascus (Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Book 4, Chapter 11)

This highlights that the presence of Christ is central to the experience of eternal life.

"The goal of God's providence is the deification of created beings, that God might be all in all, united with all beings in eternal life." St. Maximus the Confessor (Ambigua, 7.22)

St. Maximus describes the ultimate purpose of creation as union with God, which is the essence of eternal life.

*"What is eternal life? It is the unceasing contemplation of God and communion with Him in love and light." **St. Symeon the New Theologian***

This reflects the Orthodox understanding of eternal life as direct participation in God's divine presence.

The Original Plan: Life in Communion with God

*"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." **(John 17:3)***

"Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over [a]ll the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

Genesis 1:26-27

*"That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." **1 John 1:3***

*"The glory of God is a living man, and the life of man consists in beholding God." **St. Irenaeus of Lyons** (Against Heresies, Book 4, Chapter 20)*

The Nature of Eternal Life

*"God has made the human race a partaker of eternity, which is beyond time. For God is love, and love is the bond of perfection." **St. Irenaeus, Against Heresies***

*"Being made like God, we are in Him and He in us, forming one spirit through the communion of the Holy Spirit." **St. Gregory of Nyssa, On the Soul and the Resurrection***

"We know that eternal life has been given to us because we feel the Son Himself present in our hearts." St. Symeon the New Theologian, Hymns of Divine Love

The Incarnation as the Way to Restore Communion with God

*"God became man so that man might become god."
(St. Athanasius the Great: On the Incarnation)*

*"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the [c]orruption that is in the world through lust."
(2 Peter 1:2-4).*

Eternal Life as Unity with Each Other

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Ephesians 4:4-6

"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

"As we were called by the one hope of our calling, so we live in one body, under one Spirit, and have one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. Therefore, in our pursuit of eternal life, let us preserve unity with one another." St. Basil the Great (On the Holy Spirit, Chapter 26)

St. Basil emphasizes that unity among Christians reflects and prepares us for eternal life.

Love as the Essence of Communion

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." **John 13:34-35***

*"If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us."
Love for God and neighbor is the foundation of eternal life, as it reflects the divine life of the Trinity. **1 John 4:12***

The Trinitarian Model of Unity

*"That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me." **John 17:21***

Unity in Worship

*"When you partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, you become one body with the faithful, as bread is made one loaf from many grains." **St. John Chrysostom***

Unity Through Forgiveness

*"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."
Matthew 6:14*

The Role of the Church in Eternal Life

*"For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." **Luke 17:21***

Unity in Eternal Life

*"After these things, I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." **Revelation 7:9***

Unity Through the Church

*"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." **1 Corinthians 12:12-13***

Sacramental Life

*"And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." **Ephesians 1:22-23***

"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."

*In the Eucharist, believers are mystically united with Christ, receiving His Body and Blood as a foretaste of eternal communion. **John 6:56***

*"Through the sacraments, we become partakers of the divine nature and heirs of eternal life." **St. Cyril of Alexandria***

Prayer and Worship

*"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." **Galatians 6:2***

*"The liturgy is nothing else but the union of the Church, as the Body, with Christ, as the Head." **St. Nicholas Cabasilas***

Theosis (Deification)

*"by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." **2 Peter 1:4***

*"Man's true fulfillment lies in his continual growth toward God, for God's infinite nature invites eternal progress." **St. Gregory of Nyssa***

The Church as the Ark of Salvation

"...when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism." **1 Peter 3:20-21**

The Church as the Guardian of Truth

"The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." **1 Timothy 3:15**

The Church as a Community of Love (Spiritual Family)

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." **Acts 2:42**

The Church as a Sign of the Kingdom

"Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church." **St. Ignatius of Antioch**

The Church and the Saints

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight." **Hebrews 12:1**

Eternal Life Future Reality

The End of History and the Coming of the Kingdom

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God." **Revelation 21:3-4**

The Universal Resurrection: The Resurrection of the Dead

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." **1 Corinthians 15:52**

Christ's Second Coming

*"This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." **Acts 1:11***

The Final Judgment

*"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats."
Matthew 25:31-32*

The Glorified Body

*"The body will rise incorruptible, not weak as it is now, but strong and glorious, shining like the stars in the heavens." **St. John Chrysostom***

The Renewal of Creation

*"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away." **Revelation 21:1***

*"For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known." **1 Corinthians 13:12***

Participation in the Divine Life

*"Eternal life is an unending progress in the enjoyment of God's goodness." **St. Gregory of Nyssa***

The Gathering of All Nations

*"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands." **Revelation 7:9***

The Communion of Saints

*"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight." **Hebrews 12:1***

*"In that Kingdom, all will shine with the uncreated light of God, and there will be no separation between God and His saints." **St. Symeon the New Theologian***

The Joy of Eternal Life

No More Sorrow or Death

*"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." **Revelation 21:4***

An Eternal Feast

*"And in this mountain, the Lord of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees." **Isaiah 25:6***

*"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." **1 Corinthians 2:9***

Obstacles to Communion and Restoration

Sin as Separation

*"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." **Romans 6:23***

*"Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?" **James 4:1***

Healing Through Christ

*"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation." **Ephesians 2:14***