

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 12TH, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

LIFE AFTER DEATH (2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-10)

OUR AFFLICTIONS ARE TEMPORARY

Paul had just contrasted our **momentary light affliction with the eternal weight of glory** as well as the **temporary things that are seen and the eternal things that are unseen.**

- In this section, Paul will further contrast the earthly and the eternal. **"Though our outer person is being destroyed" (4:16), we have the promise of something greater.**

"WE HAVE A BUILDING FROM GOD"

Paul describes our bodies as tents, a temporary dwelling. **The idea of our "tents" being "struck down" and "destroyed" is a matter of little consequence to Paul** because he knows it will be replaced with a permanent structure, our eternal spiritual bodies.

- **Our future bodies are created by God to suit the eternal environment of heaven.**

A DESIRE FOR OUR HEAVENLY DWELLING

There is a duality to our groaning in this "tent." On one side, we groan because of the limitation of our earthly bodies, but on the other, **we groan because of an earnest desire of a superior body.**

- Paul says, **"when we are clothed, we will not be found naked,"** meaning **we will have bodies and will not be bodiless spirits.**

ALL HE HAD MADE WAS VERY GOOD (GENESIS 1:31)

Greek philosophers viewed the body as a prison and had no desire for a resurrected body, but God viewed the body as good when he created Adam and Eve. **The problem is not the body itself, but the body corrupted by sin.**

- **Our desire is not to do away with a body entirely but to replace our corrupted earthy bodies with perfected resurrected bodies.**

"MORTALITY MAY BE SWALLOWED UP BY LIFE"

Similar to how a snake swallows up an unsuspecting mouse, **death is swallowed up in victory** (1 Corinthians 15:54).

- When we receive our new eternal bodies, deterioration of our physical bodies and death are no more because **death is completely devoured**, swallowed up by life. If something is devoured, **it ceases to exist.**

A GUARANTEE OF THE PROMISE

The Holy Spirit is a great gift **we have received as a down payment**, and as glorious as the Holy Spirit is, how much more glorious will the fullness of the promise be.

- Until that day, we are in a sense absent from His glorious presence, and while in this flesh **we walk in His presence by faith and not by sight.**

CONSTANT CONFIDENCE

We gain confidence in this life because the Spirit is with us. Though we do not desire to expedite leaving our bodies and this earth, we should prefer as Paul said, **"to be away from the body and at home with the Lord."**

- This plainly tells us what happens to us when we die: **to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.**

"DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD" (1 CORINTHIANS 10:31)

What we do now has eternal consequences, and **our goal must be to please God.**

- While present in our physical bodies, everything we do is an opportunity to glorify God because once we leave these bodies, we will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, **where we will be judged based on what we have done, whether good or bad.**

COMPELLED BY LOVE (2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-15)

"SINCE WE KNOW THE FEAR OF THE LORD"

When Paul is talking about trying to persuade men of the truth it appears he is talking about something other than the truth of his apostolic authority. In a broader sense, he is talking about **their responsibility to reach the lost for Christ.**

- **Since we know that judgment is coming to all, we should be like Paul and desire that all men and women come to Jesus.**

"WE TRY TO PERSUADE PEOPLE"

Paul wants the Corinthians to be persuaded of who they are and to persuade others that **we are the righteous targets of God's wrath.**

- **God knows the truth about who we are and is not persuaded.** God is not like us; He doesn't look at the outward appearance of a person but can judge the person's heart, true character, and motive (1 Samuel 16:7).

"AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE PROUD OF US"

Paul wanted them **to be able to give thanks to God for sending a brother and friend to them like Paul.**

- He does not want them to be prideful in a negative, arrogant way, but when they understand the nature of Paul's life and ministry, they could be proud of Paul in the sense of **someone having delight and joy in the accomplishments of a friend or relative.**

"IF WE ARE OUT OF OUR MIND"

Some thought Paul was out of his mind, or beside himself for delighting in his afflictions.

- Paul was so committed to God's service that his love for God and others made him look crazy when, in fact, he was perfectly sane. **Our love for God and others should be so radically contrasted in this world that we seem beside ourselves.**

"THE LOVE OF CHRIST COMPELS US"

The love Paul has for Christ is because of the love he has received from Christ.

- The love of Christ, so mightily displayed on the cross, should have the power to constrain us and influence us. **When we understand the love of Christ and that His death was for all who would come to Him, we should be compelled to serve others.**

RECONCILIATION (2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21)

"A WORLDLY PERSPECTIVE"

Paul, in the last section of his letter, explained why **we are not to look at the external but at the substance of the heart** ("seen" vs. "unseen" 4:18; "earthly tent" vs. "eternal dwelling" 5:1; "walk by faith not by sight" 5:7; "pride in outward appearance rather than in the heart" 5:12).

- Through the Spirit, **we no longer view Christ or others from a worldly perspective.**

"GOD WAS RECONCILING THE WORLD"

The offer to be made new is available to anyone who is in Christ. To be in Christ is to trust in His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross, where Jesus' righteousness was imputed to us and our unrighteousness to Him.

- **Having reconciled us to Himself through Jesus, God expects us to participate in the ministry of reconciliation.**

GOD PLEADS THROUGH US

As an ambassador, Paul set out to be a pleasing mouthpiece for the King, acting as a representative of the King speaking only what he was commissioned to speak.

- We are ambassadors for Christ, whose sacrifice was sufficient for all who would come to Him, pleading on His behalf, **"Be reconciled to God."**

WHERE ARE OUR DESIRES PLACED?

- **Are our desires on and for things above, that are heavenly, or are they on things below, that are earthly (Colossians 3:2)?**
- **Are we earnestly desiring heaven? Have we become so comfortable in our "tents" on earth that we don't yearn for the eternal dwelling place prepared for us (John 14:2).**

WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT

- We love God, live for Him, and serve Him, living by faith, not sight, because we have never seen Him.
- Just as walking is part of every aspect of our daily activities, so we should make faith part of every aspect of our daily activities.
- **Are we willing to live as ambassadors for the one who died for us?**