

2 CORINTHIANS 5

1 For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. **2** Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, **3** because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. **4** For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. **5** Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

6 Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. **7** For we live by faith, not by sight. **8** We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. **9** So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. **10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

11 Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. **12** We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. **13** If we are “out of our mind,” as some

say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. **14** For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. **15** And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. **17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! **18** All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: **19** that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. **20** We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. **21** God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

STUDY NOTES

BlueLetterBible.org Commentary

In this discussion, Paul is bold enough to say, “**We know.**” Christians can know what the world beyond this one is like because we know what God’s eternal word says.

Our earthly house, this tent: Paul thinks of our bodies as tents — temporary structures that cannot be thought of as the whole person. If the tent is destroyed, we still have an eternal hope: a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

“Many people are in a great fright about the

future, yet here is Paul viewing the worst thing that could happen to him with such complacency that he likens it to nothing worse than the pulling down of tent in which he was making shift to reside for a little season.” (Spurgeon)

This means that we are more than our bodies and explains why Paul could consider all the pain and discomfort in his body a light affliction compared to the eternal weight of glory to come. It is a mistake to say, “My body isn’t me.” In truth, my body is me, but only part of me. There is much more to me than this body.

Salvation isn’t just for the soul or spirit, but for the body also. Resurrection is how God saves our bodies. We have a glorious new body to come. “The righteous are put into their graves all weary and worn; but as such they will not rise. They go there with the furrowed brow, the hollowed cheek, the wrinkled skin; they shall wake up in beauty and glory.” (Spurgeon)

For in this we groan: Christians therefore groan because we see both the limitations of this body and superiority of the body to come. We are earnestly desiring our new bodies.

Many of us are not earnestly desiring heaven. Is it because we are so comfortable on earth? It isn’t that we should seek out affliction, but neither should we dedicate our lives to the pursuit of comfort. There is nothing wrong with earnestly desiring heaven; there is something right about being able to agree with Paul, and saying “we groan.”

Earnestly desiring to be clothed... having been clothed, we shall not be naked: Paul is simply saying that in eternity, we will be clothed and not be naked — that is, we will not be bodiless spirits.

That mortality may be swallowed up in life: Our new bodies will not be subject to death [mortality]. Instead, as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:54, Death is swallowed up in victory. When we receive our eternal bodies, life completely conquers death.

Now He who has prepared us: God is preparing us right now for our eternal destiny. Here, Paul connects the ideas of our light affliction and the eternal weight of glory [2 Corinthians 5:17-18]. Our light affliction is (in part) how God has prepared us.

Who has also given us the Spirit as a guarantee: When the trials are hard on earth, it isn't always easy to take comfort in our heavenly destiny. God knew this, so He gave us the Spirit as a guarantee. He backs up the promise of heaven with a down payment right now, the Holy Spirit.

We can be **always confident**, even in hard times, if we keep Colossians 3:2: *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself is all the more amazing when understood in light of what happened on the cross. At some point before Jesus died, before the veil was torn in two, before Jesus cried out "it is finished," an awesome spiritual transaction took place. The Father set upon the Son all the guilt and wrath our sin deserved, and Jesus bore it in Himself perfectly, totally satisfying the justice of God for us.

Because Paul writes **we have known Christ according to the flesh**, we can surmise that Paul knew of Jesus during the days of His earthly ministry and probably even heard Jesus teach in Jerusalem. Paul may have even been among some of the Pharisees who often confronted Jesus!

A new creation: "My brethren, it was more difficult, if such terms are ever applicable to Omnipotence, it was more difficult to create a Christian than to create a world. What was there to begin with when God made the world? There was nothing; but nothing could not stand in God's way — it was at least passive. But, my brethren, in our hearts, while there was nothing that could help God, there was much that could and did oppose him. Our stubborn wills, our deep prejudices, our ingrained love of iniquity, all these, great God, opposed thee, and aimed at thwarting thy designs... Yes, great God, it was great to make a world, but greater to create a new creature in Jesus Christ." [Spurgeon]

Ambassadors for Christ: Paul sees that he serves in a foreign land as the representative of a King. The King has a message, and Paul is delivering that message as though God were pleading through us. An ambassador is more than a messenger; he is also a representative, and the honor and reputation of his country are in his hands.

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us "Christ was not guilty, and could not be made guilty; but he was treated as if he were guilty, because he willed to stand in the place of the guilty. Yea, he was not only treated as a sinner, but he was treated as if he had been sin itself in the abstract. This is an amazing utterance. The sinless one was made to be sin." [Spurgeon]



#22

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

SUFFER NOW

SUFFER LATER

OR

THE CHOICE IS YOURS

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