

## 2 Corinthians 5:1-11

### Verse 1:

--**For. . .**The context here remains our earthly bodies which are breaking down in this life finding resurrection life and glory in the next. **He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus. . . our light affliction. . . is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.**

--Now, commentators have a few different views of what is happening here but there are really only two that makes sense. This is not purgatory, or soul sleep, or even an intermediate body for the intermediate state. Paul is talking about the removal of one thing and the taking on of an eternal thing.

--Paul is either speaking about the literal home of heaven or our new resurrected bodies that we will ultimately receive. I think that the context is clear from **4:7** on that Paul is talking about these **earthen vessels** and the **outward man** that is perishing.

--So again, Paul wants them to **know** and be assured of something—that if this earthly **house or tent** is ultimately **destroyed** then God does not leave us in that condition.

--The *house* gives the idea of where we dwell. The *tent* gives the idea of something passing. So we look for a new *building* of God that is from *heaven* and *eternal*.

--Death is ultimately the separation of man's spirit from his body. God's full purpose and end for man is not to leave humanity in a broken condition. Paul let's these believers know **we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.**

--My next bodily condition—a resurrected body like that Jesus Christ—will become my unchanging eternal state.

### Verses 2-4:

--Paul here admits that every true believer should have this dissatisfied **groaning** that leads us to **earnestly** desire our **habitation which is from heaven**. \*Groaning tends to become more habitual as we get older—every time we get out of a chair or wake up!\*

--Paul makes it clear, we don't just desire to die and put off the body. That is not the end goal. Paul admits we don't desire to be **naked** or a bodiless soul.

--Our ultimate desire from God is to be **further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life!**

--So bodily life in this world should come with some godly groans for Christians. Does that sigh ever go up from your spirit? Or are you too at home here? \*If not yet, just wait, groans will come as death and corruption touch every life.\*

--If we never have those godly groans it is symptomatic of a problem.

\*Redpath (Blessing Out Of Buffetings): "If a man is content with life as it is—content with his earthly surroundings and with temporal things—what evidence is there in such a life that there is the Spirit of God?"\*

--Fortunately, the final experience for the Christian is not death and groans. The final experience for the Christian is having their mortality ***swallowed up by life!***

**\*1 Corinthians 15:54: *So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."***\*

--In all the places we once felt earthly weakness, the perishing of the outward man, the corruption of sin in our nature, and groaned for something more. Now we will know power, immortality, and heavenly life.

**\*John 10:10: *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.***\*

#### **Verse 5:**

--You see, this is God's plan for humanity in Christ. To know life. To truly live.

--How can Paul be so sure of this? Because of the example of Jesus Christ and because of the Spirit as a ***guarantee***.

**\*Ephesians 1:13-14: *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.***\*

--God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit will finish what they have begun.

--Now, there is an indeterminate amount of time between our death and our resurrection in the Scriptures—***the redemption of the purchased possession***.

--We see the resurrection happen in stages with the church age saints at the rapture (**1 Thess. 4:16-17**) and then with the OT saints (**Dan. 12:1-3**) and tribulation martyrs (**Rev. 20:4-6**).

--The intermediate state is not the proper hope of the believer. It is by name a transitional period as is this life. We don't have many details because it is intermediate.

--So, what can we know about life after death?

#### **Verses 6-8:**

--We miss something here in the English translations. The word for ***absent*** in the Greek is *ekdemeo* and the word for ***at home(6)/present(8)*** is also the same in the Greek and is *endemeo*. Paul gives a subtle play on words here with a beautiful phrase.

--Here is the main point: Anyone who dies now ends up ***at home with the Lord***. What a wonderful phrase the Holy Spirit inspires Paul to write! The Christian that passes on is among their people—at home with Jesus. The OT description was similar as it was said that Abraham and Moses among others were *gathered to their people*.

--We all know what it is to feel at home. We also know the trouble of being away from home.

--The problem is that in this world we ***walk by faith, not by sight***. We don't get to live our day to day life in the visible presence or substance of our faith. Human death looks so final!

--The seen world makes us forget about the unseen world and the unseen Christ who lives at God's right hand in a resurrected and heavenly body. Even so, we live not just heading toward that unseen world, but with the unseen world all around us. Faith acknowledges that.

*\*D.L. Moody famously said: "Some morning you will read in the papers that D.L. Moody is dead. Don't believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now. I was born of the flesh in 1837—I was born of the Spirit in 1856. That which is born of the flesh may die: that which is born of the Spirit shall live forever."\**

--That is a suitable expression of someone living by faith and not by sight.

--So what can we be confident about with our loved ones who have passed into the unseen?

What will happen when we lay aside this tent?

--Here is what we know: That to be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord.

**\*Philippians 1:21+23: For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. . . For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.\***

--The Scriptures tell us that to die now is to be at home with Jesus. That life is in fact—gain, and will be a far better experience of life.

--My moment of death—the ultimate moment of terror for the unsaved—becomes the laying aside of all that hinders my communion with Jesus Christ.

#### **Verse 9:**

--Are these comforting thoughts? Most certainly! But for Paul, they were also exhortive truths!

--If we know that when we depart we will be with Jesus, we should make it our aim to be well pleasing to Him now. What we do in these bodies matters now and then.

--***Make it our aim*** has the idea of loving honor, or to be ambitious. This is the one pure ambition in the world. Pleasing God.

**\*John 5:44: How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?\***

--We care so much about pleasing ourselves, and pleasing others, but so little for pleasing God. The very purpose of our lives has been flipped upside down by sin!

*\*Lewis (The Weight of Glory): "I read in a periodical the other day that the fundamental thing is how we think of God. By God Himself, it is not! How God thinks of us is not only more important, but infinitely more important. Indeed, how we think of Him is of no importance except insofar as it is related to how He thinks of us. It is written that we shall "stand before" Him, shall appear, shall be inspected. The promise of glory is the promise, almost incredible and only possible by the work of Christ, that some of us, that any of us who really chooses, shall actually survive that examination, shall find approval, shall please God. . . to be a real ingredient in the divine happiness. . . to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son—it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain. But so it is."\**

--Again, this was the testimony of Jesus Christ from the Father and from His own lips.

**\*Matthew 3:17: And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."\***

**\*John 8:29: And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.\***

--How or when will we know this? How can I be sure that I have pleased God?

**Verse 10:**

--We will all come to know it at the judgment seat (Bema seat) of Jesus Christ!

--Now, this doctrine is difficult for some. But it is important to recognize that every Bible truth has its proper place. We get into trouble when we allow one truth to displace another. All truth is held in balance. Every truth in the Word of God is already reconciled because it is in the Bible!

--The legalist wants his good works to count toward salvation. The lawless want their lack of works to be ignored for eternity. The child of God wants their good works to please their Father.

**\*Revelation 22:12+16: And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work. . . I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches.\***

**--For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.**

--To appear is to make a showing and to be revealed. We all have an individual and inescapable appointment with Jesus Christ. In that moment we will be revealed—body, mind, and soul.

**\*Psalm 90:8: You have set our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your countenance.\***

**\*Proverbs 23:7: For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.\***

**\*Matthew 12:36: But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.\***

--I should not be afraid or embarrassed for my motives to be seen by man but by Jesus! Our esteem of sinful men like Moses, David, Peter, or Paul is still high because of what God says about them. Not how their contemporaries saw them or how we see them now.

--This moment is the true measure of a life. Our reputations will disappear and we will be left with only our true character as seen and known and revealed in the eyes of God.

--I also think it is encouraging to realize our successes—what is pleasing—isn't measured by family, friends, churches, denominations, or popes. I have a pretty strong inkling that the successes that please Jesus will happen to be very different than the ones that please people here and now. \*Think John the Baptist; Women with the two mites; Mary and her alabaster box; etc.\*

--Are you read to appear before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ?

***--That each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.***

--To receive has the idea of receiving back what we have earned. The Bible is very clear that there will be both gain and loss at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

***\*Colossians 3:23-25: And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.\****

--We are not being judged as to whether we are sons and daughters. We are being judged as to whether we were faithful sons and daughters. Christ was judged for our salvation. Our faithfulness is judged for our rewards. Eternity is won through Christ's work. Eternal reward is won through my own works.

--Does this seem strange? I admit it may because it is not spoken of enough even in faithful Bible teaching circles! That said, Paul obviously doesn't think it is strange. He doesn't even feel it needs much explanation. If the reality of our eternal happiness is decided and secured in this life, it shouldn't be surprising to us that the quality of our eternal happiness would also be decided and secured in this life.

--There is not a single verse in the Bible that says anything like: We should live for God's glory and not eternal rewards. That is never a Biblical motivating exhortation because it is theologically incorrect. The pure desire for God's glory and eternal rewards is not conflicting.

--There are numerous reasons why this moment of eternal reward at the judgment seat of Christ is something that should motivate believers.

- 1) God's glory will be reflected in the testimony of each reward.
- 2) God's goodness will be manifested in His character as The Gracious Giver.
- 3) The necessity of our faithful stewardship of this life as strangers and pilgrims.
- 4) God's intent to make manifest the glory of His sons and daughters in this world.

--These are all true reasons why living with eternal rewards in view at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ is a godly motive for all Christians. But as emphasized here by Paul, the number one reason we should think about rewards at the Bema Seat of Jesus Christ is because any reward we receive for the good done in our body is tangible evidence that we have pleased God.

--The desire for eternal reward is truly the desire to know that we are a son or daughter in whom God is well pleased—not a greediness for riches.

-- Eternal rewards will be literal, physical, incorruptible mementos of God's pleasure! Rewards are the signets of His favor. They are the excess of His pleasure. They are the pure currency of heaven.

-- To receive an eternal reward is to know the very reason why we were created. To receive an eternal reward is to know the pleasure of God. That is what makes the heavenly crown worth our very life and death.

**\*James 1:12: Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.\***

--A transaction of love between a human heart and the heart of God has taken place *before* any transaction of eternal reward.

--Therefore it is the pleasure of God, and not the reward itself, that purifies eternal rewards as a motive for good works and gives them the high-value Scripture so clearly proclaims.

--That is why Paul can say: ***Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.***

**Verse 11:**

--Paul says that knowing ***the terror of the Lord***. . . the Greek for ***terror*** is only translated such 3x and is translated *fear* 41x in the NT. The idea is that of the *fear of the Lord*.

--The fear of the Lord is the supernatural reality that the finite creature feels when it knows that it is in the presence of The Infinite Reality of the universe—God.

--Paul—through the power of the Spirit as always—sought to persuade men to recognize this moment and live with a clean conscience before God and men.

**\*Acts 24:16: This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.\***