

**"Death and the Believer"**

**Part 3**

**2 Corinthians 5:1-9**

**Introduction:** In our last 2 studies we have been looking at how Paul desired to leave this world and to receive his glorified body. Last week we talked about how Paul had experienced being caught up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven and it was there that he was able to see what it was that awaited the believer.

**2 Corinthians 12:2-4**

<sup>2</sup> *I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.*

<sup>3</sup> *And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)*

<sup>4</sup> *How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

This privilege was something that allowed Paul to completely lose any fear of death that may have existed within him. So instead of fearing death he welcomed death for he knew that death was the means of leaving here and going to where he really desired to be.

Now last week we also looked at how we will have to wait to receive our glorified bodies after we die. The reason for the wait is because our bodies will not be resurrected and glorified until the rapture.

**1 Thessalonians 4:16**

<sup>16</sup> *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

<sup>17</sup> *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

We can parallel this with 1 Corinthians 15.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-54**

<sup>51</sup> *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

<sup>52</sup> *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and **the dead shall be raised incorruptible**, and we shall be changed.*

<sup>53</sup> *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

<sup>54</sup> *So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*

This is what Paul groaned for and earnestly desired to experience.

### **Notice 2 Corinthians 5:2-4**

So Paul longed to drop his robe of flesh and to be clothed with the body which is not made with hands, meaning it is not of this world, eternal in the heavens. Now he longed for this for 3 reasons:

1. **He was caught up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven and he experienced what awaited him and us.**
2. **He longed to be separated from the sinful flesh because he knew how much it hindered his service.**

Now there is yet one more reason why he desired to be clothed with "the house from heaven" and this will be our first point tonight.

- i. **It was God's plan for each of His children.**

### **Notice 2 Corinthians 5:5a**

Here we see that God "wrought us" for this very thing. Now let me show you how the word "wrought" is used in another verse to help us to see what Paul is saying here.

### **Romans 5:3**

<sup>3</sup> *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation **worketh** patience;*

The trials and the tribulations which we face in our lives are ALL WORKING toward building our ENDURANCE as we press forward for the cause of Christ.

This is the very idea in 2 Corinthians 5:5a. God is working in our lives to transform us into the image of His Son and the final finishing touch will be our glorified body. This helps us

to know that while we are in these bodies of flesh we will NEVER reach our full potential and we will never be the person God has for us to be.

This made me think about how much we are hindered in these bodies. But most of the time we are not even aware of how far we are from who God desires for us to be. We are like the fish in the aquarium swimming in the water who does not even know he is wet. He is so submerged into his surroundings and he is so used to his surroundings that he does not know he is wet. In the same way we are so accustomed to these bodies and our sinful surroundings that we do not even understand how far short we are of the glory that awaits us in the glorified body.

### **Romans 8:18**

*<sup>18</sup> For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

### **1 John 3:1-2**

*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

*<sup>2</sup> Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

So getting back to the thought: Paul longed for the glorified body because he knew that while he was in his flesh he would never be the man God desired for him to be.

## **II. The Assurance**

### **Notice 2 Corinthians 5:5b**

Let me show you the meaning of the word "earnest".

*"The money which in purchases is given as a pledge or down payment that the full amount will subsequently be paid."*

The "earnest" was a down payment which was given as a pledge and it was a guarantee that the transaction would be completed in the future. When a man placed an "earnest" upon something it was a guarantee that he would be back to get it.

This is the very idea with you and me. God has given to us the Holy Spirit and He is the "down payment" that guarantees God will finish what He has started in our lives.

### **Ephesians 1:10-14**

<sup>10</sup> *That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*

<sup>11</sup> *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*

<sup>12</sup> *That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

<sup>13</sup> *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*

<sup>14</sup> *Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. unto the praise of his glory.*

### III. The Confidence

#### Notice 2 Corinthians 5:6

The word "therefore" refers back to what has just been stated in verses 1-5. Based upon the Truth that Paul would receive a glorified body and based on the Truth that he had the earnest of the Spirit he tells his readers that he was ALWAYS confident. The word "confident" means "to be of good courage". There are 2 thoughts I want to help you to see here.

#### 1. Our present bodies are our home.

Here Paul mentions that these present bodies are our home away from home for now. This was probably a reminder to those who were caught up in the "Dualism" which taught that the matter was evil and spirit was good. They believed that the body was evil. That was not true for the body has been fearfully and wonderfully made. It is sin that has burdened the body. It is sin in these bodies that keep us from being all that God desires for us to be. So since these bodies are our home away from home it is our responsibility to take care of this home. Paul also stated here that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. This means that we are absent in the sense that we are not standing before Him face to face. I say this because we are never separated from our Lord.

#### Hebrews 13:5

<sup>5</sup> *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

#### 2. Knowledge of God's Word brings joy no matter what the circumstances are which we face.

Here is something which we really need to grasp onto. It was Paul's KNOWLEDGE of what awaited him which gave him the CONFIDENCE which was good cheer as he faced the trials of life. Let me show you what his knowledge sustained him through.

**2 Corinthians 11:23-28**

<sup>23</sup> *Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.*

<sup>24</sup> *Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.*

<sup>25</sup> *Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;*

<sup>26</sup> *In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;*

<sup>27</sup> *In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

<sup>28</sup> *Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*

In all of this Paul was "**of good courage**" in the sense that he knew the sufferings of the present could not compare with the future glory.

**Romans 8:18**

<sup>18</sup> *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

**Notice 2 Corinthians 5:8**

Paul states here that he was not only confident because of the knowledge he had but he was WILLING rather to be absent from the body in order to be present with the Lord. In other words Paul is stating here that he would prefer death over life because of what God had for him in eternity.

It is also important to notice here that Paul says he preferred to be absent from the body to be present with the Lord which tells us that the moment we die we are immediately in the presence of our Lord and Savior. There is no purgatory and there is no soul sleep.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 5:7**

Here was Paul's key to living with great courage no matter what he faced. He walked by faith in the promises of God. This is how God desires for us to live.

**Hebrews 11:6**

<sup>6</sup> **But without faith it is impossible to please him:** for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Paul faced great persecution in his life but he never lost his courage. He knew what God had promised to him and so he walked by faith in God's promises. Faith in the promises of God gave Paul a great peace within his heart. Let me remind you of what Paul wrote in Philippians 4.

**Philippians 4:6-9**

<sup>6</sup> *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

<sup>7</sup> **And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

<sup>8</sup> *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

<sup>9</sup> *Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and **the God of peace shall be with you.***

Conclusion:

**Notice 2 Corinthians 5:9**

Here in this verse we see Paul's ambition. The word "labour" here means "to seek after honor". Paul is saying here, "We have this holy ambition which is to please our Lord".

What is your ambition in life? What is it that drives you? It should be a desire to please God in all that we do. The word "accepted" here in this verse means "to please". There are many believers who labor to please the flesh as they go through this life. They know very little when it comes to sacrifice for the Lord. They indulge in the desires of the flesh and so life quickly passes by and the end comes like an unexpected visitor. Then they will stand before the Lord. It will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ that they will realize what they wasted away. They will see how empty it was to live for this world when they could have been living to advance the Kingdom of our dear Lord.

John Phillips gives the illustration of a man whose ambition was to climb the ladder of success. He did not care who he stepped on to reach the top. When he finally arrived at the top he found the ladder was leaning against the wrong wall.

We must understand that a life lived to please our Lord will NEVER leave us disappointed. What we sacrifice here will be replaced with eternal rewards.

**Luke 18:28-30**

<sup>28</sup> *Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.*

<sup>29</sup> *And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,*

<sup>30</sup> *Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.*