

Parson to Person

2 Corinthians 5 – Part 1

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 4:16–5:8).

Palm Sunday

Today is traditionally the day Christian believers remember Palm Sunday. This is the day when (nearly 2000 years ago) Jesus (four days before His crucifixion) rode into Jerusalem in direct fulfillment of a very specific Bible prophecy—*“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9).*

In Exodus we read, *“Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household... Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year... Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight”* (Exodus 12:3–6 abridged).

The combined passages show us the typology of the Jewish Feast Day known as Passover—for Jesus is the fulfillment of the Passover Feast and is indeed the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world (see Luke 1:29 and 1 Corinthians 65:7b).

The day of that Palm Sunday Jesus also fulfilled the specific promise described to Daniel—*“And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself...”* (Daniel 9:26a). Thus that specific Palm Sunday was exactly 483 years after the prophecy was given—providing the precise fulfillment.

The unbelieving Jews missed this altogether. For this reason, Jesus said, *“If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes”* (Luke 19:42).

I thank the Lord that we as believers see this prophecy and fulfillment in its full context. Today we celebrate this glorious day—in which we remember the passion of Jesus and all He has done to redeem us from our sin.

The Temporary—Don’t be Addicted to Time

As we continue our study in 2 Corinthians, we note that Paul’s discussion on fatigue in ministry reaches across the chapter breaks. Therefore, we should allow the context to remain intact. Paul was reminding the believers in Corinth that ministry is difficult but worth our “efforts” and service.

In the last three verses of chapter 4 we read, *“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal”* (2 Corinthians 4:16–18).

This reminder gives focus to my warning against addiction to time! This (present) earthly life is brief and its “trappings” are temporary.

This Tent

In chapter 5 we see Paul illustrate the temporary nature of our earthly bodies in comparison to the heavenly/resurrected bodies we are promised. It is comparable with the tent (of meeting) in the wilderness and the Temple that was built under the leadership of Solomon.

Comparing the tent to the Temple allows us to see the future glory of our resurrection bodies.

The Eternal House

Our heavenly bodies will be like the resurrected body of Jesus. It was physical but not subject to time, gravity, space, sickness, disease, death, pain, etc.

Paul wrote, *“For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up*

by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:1–8).

The Guarantee—By the Holy Spirit

Paul’s parenthetical/rhetorical statement, *“if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked”* (vs. 3), was simply a quirky way of reinforcing the fact that we will not be *“found naked.”*

Our new and heavenly body is promised: *“He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee”* (vs. 5). *“We have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”* (vs. 1). We have no need to fear being *“naked”* as some have erroneously interpreted the passage. We are secure in Jesus—and promised the *“further clothing”* of immortality.

The Death of His Saints—No Soul Sleep

Finally, I should mention that when we the believer dies (graduates to heaven) we are not trapped in our earthly tent/body, we are not buried in the ground sleeping in the dust, we are not separated from the Lord. We are immediately in the presence of the Lord.

Consider the three passages that help with this concern:

- 1) James wrote, *“For as the body without the spirit is dead...”* (James 2:26a).
- 2) Paul wrote, *“...Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my*

labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you” (Philippians 1:21b–24).

- 3) Here in our text we read, *“So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:6–8).*

Therefore, we know that death is the departure of the spirit (the true you) from the body, and when we depart from the body we are immediately with Christ.

The Resurrection of Our Mortal Bodies

The body (the flesh—*“this tent”*) is generally buried, or otherwise remains earthly until the time of the physical resurrection. However, as we have learned in other passages of Scripture, a promise remains of physical resurrection for the believer: *“For if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Romans 8:11).* (See also 1 Corinthians 15.)

I love you all,
Pastor Paul