

2 Corinthians 5

Day 1

The Mortal and Eternal. Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-5

1. What do believers “know”? 5:1 (What is our “tent”? 5:6)

- List the phrases Paul uses to describe our heavenly bodies. 5:1b

2. Underline how heavenly bodies are described in the following:

- 1 Corinthians 15:52-53...the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. NIV
- Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. NIV
- 1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. NAS

3. What state will we **not** be in when we die? 5:3

Naked *gumnos* Strong's NT:1131 signifies...of "the soul without the body," 2 Cor 5:3
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"Paul is saying that in eternity, we will be **clothed** and not be **naked** – that is, we will not be bodiless spirits. The Greek philosophers thought that a bodiless spirit was the highest level of existence. They thought of the body as a prison for the soul, and saw no advantage in being resurrected in another body."
- David Guzik

Digging Deeper
What was David's future hope? See Psalm 16:11; 17:15

4. What causes a believer to groan? 5:2,4a (Compare Romans 8:21-23)

- What had Paul written to the Corinthians about this earlier? 1 Corinthians 15:44; 51-54
- What did Jesus teach? John 6:39-40

5. What will happen to mortality/death? 5:4b (CR 1 Corinthians 15:26; Revelation 21:4)

6. When did Paul say this would happen? 1 Corinthians 15:23 (See also John 6:40)

FYI: There are many questions and suggestions about what happens between our earthly death and heavenly resurrection. Are we conscious or not? Do we have a body or not? Do we live in a disembodied state (our soul is awake and alive but our body is dead)? Are we asleep with no awareness of time passing? Do we have a temporary body until resurrection? Do we receive our resurrection body immediately upon death?

Position of having no body:

"When Christ returns, those bodies now corrupting in their graves will "put on incorruption," while those still living but subject to death will "put on immortality" (I Corinthians 15:54...If our earthly house is "dissolved" (II Corinthians 5:1) before Christ returns, there will be an intermediate period "with the Lord" (II Corinthians 5:8) in which we shall neither wear our present body nor our future resurrection body. It was thus Paul's earnest desire and, surely ours as well, still to be living when Christ returns, and thus immediately to be "clothed upon" with our resurrection bodies...

The period between one's death and resurrection, even though a time of blessed fellowship with the Lord (II Corinthians 5:8), is compared to a state of nakedness, since the spirit/soul system is without its body, or "spiritual clothing," awaiting Christ's return to earth."
- Henry Morris

Position of never being without a body:

"Where are we during the time between death and resurrection? The scriptural answer: The moment we die, we are instantly with the Lord. (Philippians 1:22-23) ...But how can that be? If we receive our resurrection bodies on the day of the Lord's return, how can we be present with the Lord at the very moment we die? Some people suggest that we receive temporary bodies to use until we receive our resurrection bodies - but there is not a single verse of Scripture to support that idea.

I believe there is only one possible answer: when we leave our earthly bodies, we also leave time. We are used to thinking in terms of sixty-minute hour and twenty-four-hour days, because that is all we know. That's the only kind of time we have ever experienced. So we tend to think of eternity as time that goes on and on and on. But eternity is not time. Eternity is timeless.

The evidence of Scriptures is that when we die, we exit time and enter a timeless eternity, so that there is no sense of waiting or time passing between the moment we die and the moment we receive our resurrection bodies. From our perspective, it will be as if we close our eyes in death - then open our eyes in our new resurrection bodies. This will be true for all the saints who have ever passed through death - those who died five seconds ago and those who died five millennia ago."
- Ray Stedman (319)

7. When did God plan this? 5:5a (See Ephesians 1:4)

- How are we assured of this hope? 5:5b (CR Eph 1:13-14)

FYI: "The gift of the Holy Spirit not only empowers believers to live holy lives (Eph. 3:16) but also serves as a guarantee and reminder that God will one day fully complete His work in believers."

- Faithlife Illustrated Study Bible (1940)

Applying the Word: *Regardless of what happens between death and resurrection, what focus and hope should we have?*

Day 2

Walk by Faith, Not by Sight. Read 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

8. How did Paul contrast our earthy and heavenly states?
- 5:6 “*at home in the body we are*
 - 5:8 “*absent/away from the body and*
9. How did Paul feel about this? 5:8 (What did he add to this in Philippians 1:21-24?)
10. Since we are “absent from the Lord” how do we walk? 5:7 (Compare 4:18)

FYI: “We are **at home in the body** so there is a sense in which we are **absent from the Lord**, at least in the sense of His immediate, glorious presence... The day will come when...we will not have to **walk by faith**, but we will see the glory and the presence of God **by sight**.”
- David Guzik

Faith

11. Consider: Paul, the apostles, and many others had **seen** the Lord (see 1 Cor. 3:5-8). “*Paul makes it clear throughout his writings that Christian faith is based not on mere ideas, but on events seen by eyewitnesses at a specific point in history [Hebrews 2:3-4; John 19:35; 1 John 1:1-3] . In this sense, Christian faith involves ‘sight.’*” - Ted Dorman (59)
- How is faith defined in Hebrews 11:1? (*What does this say about the idea that faith is a feeling or that essentially we “just have to have faith”?*)
 - What does Abraham’s example say about faith? Romans 4:20,21

Faith Strong’s *pistis* NT:4102; to win over, persuade. Faith. Subjectively meaning firm persuasions, conviction, belief in the truth, reality or faithfulness.

Assurance/being sure of/substance (Heb. 11:1) Strong’s NT:5287 *Hupostasis*, a setting under (support), i.e. (figuratively) concretely, essence, or abstractly, assurance

Being certain/conviction/evidence Strong’s NT:1650 *elegchos*, proof, conviction:

In Hebrews 11:1 “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” not the outcome of imagination but is based on fact, such as the reality of the resurrection of Christ and as such it becomes the basis of realistic hope. ...that which appears before us may not be what it seems to be, while faith is something which stands on proof arrived at inductively.”
- The Complete Word Study Dictionary (1162)

“For our assurance of salvation is not based on our circumstances, our feelings, or our perfection...Our Father is the source of our assurance, Christ is the ground of our assurance, and the Spirit is the sustainer of our assurance. And our assurance is not established on the strength of our faith but on the object of our faith, Jesus Christ.”
- Burk Parsons <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/object-our-faith/>

12. Read through **evidences** God has given of Himself to man. Underline anything that is particularly meaningful to you.

Creation:

Romans 1:18-20 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. NIV

Psalms 19:1 The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. NAS

Eye-witness accounts of Jesus' life and works by Apostles and others:

Acts 1:1-3 I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing/infallible proofs (*literally: "many criteria of certainty"*) that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. NIV

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Acts 10:38-41 "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. 39 "We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. 40 "God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, 41 not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. NAS

1 John 1:1-3 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life -- 2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us -- 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, NAS

2 Peter 1:16 We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. NIV

Prophecy:

Acts 3:18 "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. NAS

Luke 24:44-4 Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." NAS

Acts 26:22 "So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; NAS

Truth and reliability of the Scriptures:

Acts 18:28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. NAS

1 Thessalonians 2:13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. NAS

2 Timothy 3:15 from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. NAS

John 5:39 "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; NAS

13. Which of the evidences has most impacted your faith? Why?

Applying the Word: Why is relying on only the external appearance of earthly things often so unreliable or deceptive?

Day 3

Pleasing the Lord. Read 2 Corinthians 5:9-15

14. Because of this hope, what should always be our goal? 5:9

- What is our responsibility? Ephesians 2:10

15. Although we can't physically "see" the Lord, underline how close and active He is in our lives.

- John 14:19-20 ...Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. NIV
- John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit NAS
- Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; NAS
- Ephesians 3:16-17 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.
- 1 John 3:24 And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. NIV

Digging Deeper

How did Paul explain our purpose in life while still here on earth in Titus 2:11-14?

16. What should we keep in mind? 5:10

- How deeply can God judge, and what do we receive? 1 Cor. 4:5

17. How had Paul described this judgement of a man's work in 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 (Note: How will believers *themselves* stand "in Christ"? Romans 8:1)

FYI: "We won't be *punished* for what was not done rightly unto the Lord; those things will simply be *burned up*, and it will be as if we never did them. We will simply be rewarded for what remains." - David Guzik

Paul's Ministry on Their Behalf

18. How did these thoughts carry over into Paul's ministry? 5:11a

FYI: "*The fear of the Lord* is not a sense of terror; rather it's the respect and awe we feel when we recognize that our God is a God of truth. We can't escape the truth about ourselves that He will reveal." Ray Stedman (324)

19. What did Paul *hope*? 5:11b (CR 2 Cor. 1:12-13; 2:17; 4:2)

- How did Paul describe his goal in 1 Timothy 1:5?

20. Why was Paul explaining his motives and sharing his "heart" for his ministry to the Corinthians? 5:12

- By what standard were Paul's accusers making judgments? 5:12b

Seen/appearance Strongs NT:4383 *proson* the countenance, aspect, appearance, surface; by implication, presence, person:

"One problem with the Corinthian Christians is that they *liked those who glory in appearance and not in heart*. They looked down on Paul because his glory was not *in appearance* and only *in heart*. By telling the Corinthian Christians how God worked through his struggles and trials, Paul gave them *something to answer those who thought that way*."
- David Guzik

21. Apparently, how far had some gone in accusing Paul? 5:13
What would seem "crazy" about Paul's ministry? (See 1 Cor. 4:10-13)

Digging Deeper
What accusations were made against Jesus?
- Mark 3:21,22

- John 10:20

22. No matter what people thought, who did Paul put first? 5:13

FYI: "If Paul was beside himself in exposing himself to danger, it was for God. If he was of a sound mind, it was for the sake of the Corinthians. The point is that Paul's motive for ministry was for the glory of God and the good of others, not for his own glory. Thus, the Corinthians could justly defend him." - The Nelson Study Bible (1951)

"Whether Paul's conduct is seen as extreme or rational, it is always in keeping with his calling."

- The Africa Bible Commentary (1404)

Love of Christ

22. What energized and drove Paul in spite of hardships? 5:14

- How did Christ demonstrate His love? 5:14b (See 1 John 4:9-10)
- How is the God's love described in Ephesians 3:19?

FYI: *Compels/constrains/controls* Stong's NT:4912 *sunecho*; to hold together, i.e. to compress or arrest (a prisoner); figuratively, to compel, perplex, afflict, preoccupy

"Love is the greatest motivator of all. The love of Christ refreshes our spirits and energizes us to go the extra mile. When we know that Jesus loves us and believes in us, our confidence soars - and so does our incentive."

- Ray Stedman (325)

"The overwhelming love of Christ who gave His all for His people was so powerful an influence on the Apostle that he gladly gave himself in service for others, the only adequate way of expressing his love in return." - Stuart Allen (222)

"How did Jesus **die for all**? In the sense that His death is *able* to save **all** who will come to Him and is a *demonstration* of God's love to **all**; but *not* in the sense that all are saved because Jesus died (the false doctrine of universalism). There is no doubt that there is a sense in which Jesus died for the whole world: (1 John 2:2). But the **all** Paul mentions here is probably "all the saved."
- David Guzik

23. When Christ died on our behalf (as our representative) what happened to us? 5:14b

- What does this mean? See Romans 6:6,14 (Romans 6 gives a description of dying to sin but being alive to God.)

24. How should this affect how we live? 5:15

Applying the Word: *What experience from your life would you give to illustrate how God's love drew you or compelled you to follow Him? (Why is love rather than "fear" a more powerful motivator?)*

Day 4

New Identity. Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

25. “Therefore” (see 5:14,15) how should we judge people differently? 5:16

26. In what ways do you think Paul may have regarded Christ from a worldly point of view? (What are some things people had criticized Jesus about? Matthew 13:55,56)

Digging Deeper
See Paul’s majestic descriptions of Jesus in 1 Timothy 6:15-16; Colossians 1:15-18

27. What change in identity do believers have? 5:17 (See John 3:3-6.)

FYI: “Being a **new creation** doesn’t mean that we are perfect. It means that we *are* changed and that we are *being* changed... **All things are of God:** Paul soars high here...This work of *a new creation* and our eternal destiny are works **of God**, not something we have to earn and achieve.”
- David Guzik

28. How was this achieved? 5:18a (Eph. 2:4-8)

- What state were we in when this was achieved? See Romans 5:8,10

Reconciliation *katallage* Strong’s NT:2643...primarily "an exchange," denotes "reconciliation," a change on the part of one party, induced by an action on the part of another; in the NT, the "reconciliation" of men to God by His grace and love in Christ...in 2 Cor 5:18,19”
- Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

“God places our sin on Christ, who knew no sin. His death was in our place and for our sins. If we believe in Jesus, God counts Jesus’ righteousness as our righteousness (vs. 21). The message of reconciliation that has been entrusted to us is to tell all people that God wants to restore them to a relationship with Himself. This is the Good News that everyone needs to hear.”
- The Nelson Study Bible

29. What ministry did God give us? 5:18b,19

- What responsibility does this give us? 5:20

30. How was this reconciliation achieved? 5:21 (See Romans 3:23-24)

FYI: “There is a wonderful exchange here. Christ takes the believer’s sins and receives the judgment of them in Himself, whereas the believer is given a righteous status before God...God’s righteousness which is reckoned his as a free gift through Christ (Phil. 3:9; Romans 3:11).”
- Stuart Allen (225)

“This is the whole truth of justification stated simply: Our sins were on Jesus, and His righteousness is on us... “As Christ was not made sin by any sin inherent in him, so neither are we made righteous by any righteousness inherent in us...” (Poole)”
- David Guzik

Applying the Word: Consider the job of an ambassador appointed by a president. How are his duties similar to being an ambassador for Christ?
e.g. We are a representative delivering his message.

Memory Verse: (pick one)

2 Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. NKJV

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! NIV

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. NIV

A New Creation - In Christ:

You are forgiven:

Ephesians 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace (NIV)

You are justified:

Romans 4:25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. (NIV)

You are at peace with God:

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (NIV)

You are saved from wrath:

Romans 5:9-10 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! (NIV)

You are not condemned:

Rom 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, (NIV)

Ephesians 1:4 He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him. (NAS)

You have free access to God:

Ephesians 2:18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. (NIV)

Ephesians 3:12 In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. (NIV)

Hebrews 4:16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (NIV)

Hebrews 10:19-20 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, (NIV)

You are complete in Him:

Colossians 2:9-10 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority. (NAS)

You are loved and cared for:

Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (NIV)

1 Pet 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (NIV)

Hebrews 13:5-6 ...God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (NIV)

You have His life in you:

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. (NAS)

Colossians 1:27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (NIV)

You have His righteousness:

1 Corinthians 1:30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God-- that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. (NIV)

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (NIV)

Philippians 3:9 and may be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith. (NAS)

You are a new creations:

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (NIV)

1 Corinthians 6:11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (NIV)

Titus 3:4-6 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, (NIV)

Your inheritance is guaranteed:

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. (NIV)

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. (NKJ)

You are blessed with heavenly blessings:

Ephesians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. (NIV)

You have been raised and seated in the heavenly realms:

Colossians 3:1-4 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (NIV)

Ephesians 2:6,7 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (NIV)