

PRODIGAL

CHURCH II

A SERIES IN 2 CORINTHIANS



PRODIGAL CHURCH (SEASON 2) - HOMESICK FOR HEAVEN

Community Group Study Guide 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 - Week of October 3

Introduction

- An honest life should be lived in acknowledgement of the fact that a person's body dies, but his soul does not.
- Our theology of death should shape our theology of life.
- When someone who we know dies, we get a stark reminder that we are not home.
- Christ has vanquished death and all of its powers. Christians should, therefore, live with a different and more positive view of life.
- The apostle Paul looked right at death by living with an active expectation of it. Instead of making him depressive or morbid, it galvanized him to live a fruitful and useful life. The expectation of death should have the same effect on all Christians.
- In this section of scripture, Paul is trying to cultivate a homesickness for home/heaven. He establishes that though we're just sojourners and pilgrims passing through this life, we should be agents of good who constantly work for reconciliation and redemption.

We long (1-3)

- After outlining his hardships up to this point in his letter, as a leader being critiqued, Paul shows that he is not defeated and that he has not lost heart. He shares his understanding of life/death that helps him confront hardship in this life as a believer. He reveals that his heart, while in the body, is set on a future so glorious that he is able to see through and endure all of the challenges that he faces.
- For Paul, what is seen is transient, and what is unseen is eternal. He built his life around what is unseen. What is unseen? God, his glory and kingdom, and eternal souls. If Jesus is your greatest treasure, nobody can do anything to take him or your purpose in this life away from you.
- V1: Paul contrasts "tent" and "earthly home" (to describe our earthly body) with "building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heavens" (to describe our eternal resurrected body).
- Paul is saying that this tent (this body) is vulnerable and impermanent. There's no foundation to it, and we're susceptible to disease, aging and death. It cannot handle storms.
- When a Christian loses his earthly body, he upgrades to one that is far better. See Phil. 3:20-21.
- V2-3: Paul longed and yearned to put on his heavenly redeemed body, and thought about it a lot. We should too. See Col. 3:1-4.
- Christians aren't heavenly minded because we don't think about heaven enough. To do it more, imagine every aspect of body and creation in its redeemed state. Such activity will reveal that we've been working with and building with LEGOs in this life.
- In heaven your body is a home. Wherever you go your body gives you everything that you get from home in this life (rest, respite, satiation).

We Groan (4-5)

- V5: We groan for glory, when we will have perfect fullness of life when soul and body will be perfected and united. This comes upon our resurrection, when Christ returns.
- "Not that we would be unclothed...": Paul is not speaking negatively of the body in this life or promoting sentimental sappiness. The body is not bad, as it is from God. We don't just wait for our souls to fly away. We await the time when our body and soul will be in perfect renewed unity.
- Christians live in the tension of loving life, as it is from God and in Christ, and awaiting the time when Christ will return in his glorified state and make all things new.
- "Nakedness" is the state when our soul is perfected, but in an unnatural and imperfect state,

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

To understand that a proper view of death should shape our life.

Heart

To long for heaven more than anything in life.

Hands

To aim to please God in all that we do while we await the day that Christ returns and unites our souls and bodies in glorified, perfect union.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members please **RSVP to Mosaic's 10th birthday gathering**. See the latest email from Chloe.

HELP IS NEEDED for setup and teardown for Mosaic's 10th Birthday Party. Sign up here: <https://mosaicboston.churchcenter.com/people/forms/284110>

separate from the body before Christ's return. To die and have one's soul go to Christ is gain for a Christian, but it's not fullness of life in comparison to the time when soul and body will be in perfected union.

- Part of our groaning includes weakness and sickness. Even those redeemed in Christ cannot avoid these conditions until death is fully swallowed. See 1 Cor. 15:50-58 and 1 Thess. 4:13-18.
- In our glorified body, our groaning will be over. We will be redeemed to what we were meant to be, and clothed in power and beauty. Jesus' power in his resurrected body gives us a sense of the capabilities that we will have.
- V5: Believers have the Holy Spirit now as a guarantee of the life to come. As the Holy Spirit rose Jesus from the dead, he will raise us too.

We Know (6-8)

- V6-8: Those who are in Christ know with certainty that that they are going to heaven. Even though death means separation of soul and body, Christians do not have to fear it for we know that they will one day be united. We can have certainty because our salvation isn't contingent upon our own performance/works, but faith in those of Christ.
- Pastor Jan lost three of his best friends very early in life. He believes that God used these moments to teach him how to love people even knowing people will leave. This is the only way to love someone without hedging our emotional bets. Christ loved people to his and their death.
- Believers are pilgrims, people who are just traveling home. The best way to travel is to travel light and to take what you can lose.

We aim (9)

- V9: If you trust in Jesus you'll go to heaven. However, you're not there yet, so live and aim for God's glory.
- The most spiritual people are the most practical people. For them, heaven isn't just a destination it's also a motivation. The more heavenly-minded one is the more earthly good he will do.
- Maturity in the faith is marked by prayer that isn't focused on oneself or one's own needs, but that which is centered on pleasing God. Maturing believers should be asking God how they can please him and honor him with their lives.

We appear (10)

- Every Christian will stand at the judgment seat of Christ. The first judgment that we face is with regards to how we've received or rejected Jesus for salvation. If we don't believe in Christ, we go to a place called hell, a place of eternal damnation. The second judgment, only for Christians, is when we will have to give and account for the ways that we were fruitful and faithful in our service to the kingdom of God. We'll give an account for what we did, how we did it and why we did it. See Rom. 14:12; Eph. 6:8; Phil. 4:1; Rev. 14:13; Heb. 13:17.
- Most people spend more time planning their vacation than their eternity.
- The thought in this last point makes it clear that the most important work in this life is serving God and people. The best way to serve people is to help them improve their lives, spaces and homes. As you do that, you show them that this isn't home, and you help them get to their eternal home.
- Jesus Christ is our home because he left home for us. He left his heavenly dwelling, lived a homesick and homeless life, and experienced cosmic homesickness and loneliness on the cross when the Father did not hear his cries. He did all this to give us a home.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-10.

1. One of the first points that Pastor Jan made was, "Our theology of death should shape our theology of life." What does this mean?
2. From reading this text and others that you've read from the apostle Paul, how did his understanding of death impact the way that he lived and faced trials?
3. How has Jesus Christ provided a permanent "home" for those who believe in him?
4. Why can Christians have full assurance that they are going to heaven?
5. Thinking about Christ's abilities and powers after his resurrection, what are some of the ways that we will be different in our resurrected bodies?
6. While we long and groan for the day that our souls and bodies are in perfected, glorified union, what view must we avoid about our present life?
7. What is the first judgment that all people will face upon death (or Christ's return, if still alive)?
8. What is the second judgment that only Christians will face upon Christ's return?
9. How does the promise of the second judgment serve as a source of motivation for the way that Christians serve God and others, and pray in this life?
10. Being completely honest with yourself (and others present), in your heart do you long for heaven or things of this life more?