

## 2 Corinthians 5

Once again thank you for joining us. Happy mothers day to all the moms out there, I hope you have a wonderful day.

We're resuming our VBV study through 2 Corinthians, would you please turn to 2nd Cor 5 in your Bibles please?

Last week as we concluded chapter 4, we saw how Paul has just contrasted our light affliction with a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and how the things which are seen and temporary are nothing compared to that which isn't seen and eternal.

Now, at the beginning of chapter 5, Paul describes in more detail about this contrast between the earthly and the eternal.

We're gonna study verses 1-17, and the title of this mornings message is THE HOPE OF HEAVEN!

Let's pray

Let's read verses 1-8 together then we'll break them down

1 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. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 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. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Before I share this story, I asked one of our faithful attendees here, Tina, if it was ok to share it. And she selflessly said yes. On 3/11, 2020, COVID was on the tip of everyone's tongue. Restrictions were being put into place.

Yet through the mercy of the Lord, I was allowed to go into a nursing facility where Tina's mom, Katherine had been staying. Tina called me because her mom Katherine was not doing well, she was nearing the end of life.

Now Katherine was a devoted follower of Christ. So as Tina, her sister and I sat there with her mom, I began reading these verses- the verses you and I just read together regarding the promises of heaven.

And in a heart-wrenching, yet powerful and beautifully dramatic moment, it was when I was reading these verses about going to heaven, that Katherine took her final breath, and peacefully entered eternity with her savior Jesus. I've never seen anything like it before or since. It was the most amazing, peaceful passing I've ever seen.

These verses are more than just words, they describe our hope, how we can face the difficulties and tribulations we all face, because we know that heaven awaits us as followers of Christ!

1 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. In the book of Acts we learn that when Paul stayed in Corinth, he earned a living for himself by making tents.

So it's no wonder that the Bible compares our human bodies to that of a tent. **SHOW PIC** Think about the similarities between our bodies and a tent.

-Both are temporary dwellings.

-Both are fragile and flimsy, and don't last a long time in harsh elements

-Both our bodies and tents wear out with a lot of usage! **CLOSE PIC**

It's interesting when you go to a campground you never see a person hanging up photos in their tent. Nor do they buy a big chair or loveseat to put in their tent. Why-because it's temporary!

In our culture death gets depicted as the grim reaper, a sinister character who kills and steals. Yet here in verse 1 the apostle describes the most dreadful moment in a person's life -our death - as simply, striking a tent - pulling up a few pegs, collapsing some poles, and folding up a canvas.

Our body's crack and wither with time. But there's more to us than these tents of flesh. **SHOW PIC** Like a pistachio, I'm more than the outer shell. The real Brian is the nut on the inside! **CLOSE PIC**

One day you and I will receive eternal housing - a body made from elements not subject to decay or deterioration. Our heavenly body won't have to be refueled, or rested, or repaired. One day our spirits will be given the keys to hassle-free housing. We'll get heavenly, glorified bodies!

Now we're not told very much of what this will be like for us, but Jesus does offer us clues, so would you hold your spot here and turn to John 14 please. We're just gonna look at the first 2 verses of John 14.

**1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.**

Now the Bible tells us there will be a time of no more tears, and no more death. But we're not at the point right now are we?

It would be a whole lot easier when we die if our soul, mind and body they all went to the Lord at the same time. Think about it-if the soul, mind and body all disappeared when a loved one dies there'd be some closure! Imagine-a person takes their last gasp-and poof their body is gone.

That would make death a lot easier to deal with!

But that's not what happens. When someone dies, their soul is no longer there, but their shell lays there, the shell we hugged, and talked to, went out to eat with, the shell is still there and it's troubling!

But there is a reality beyond that shell of body, the reality of eternity!

**1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us**

again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, What a day that will be, when we are in glory!

2 In My Father's house are many mansions;[fn] if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.[fn] Jesus says I would never let you be deceived, I would never give you a false hope. If it weren't so I woulda told you!!!

Yes with all the trouble around us, and our failing bodies that we're just lugging around, we have the hope of heaven because of Jesus!

There is something that resonates in every one of us in regards to heaven. God has implanted eternity in our hearts. **Ecclesiastes 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.**

In a recent Pew research poll, 73% of Americans say they believe in heaven. But it's tragic how few know the simple truth-that there's only way to get to heaven! **John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me."**

And as followers of Christ, Jesus promises us there are many mansions-in the original greek it means many dwelling places.

There's a book, I think the title is 'living with cancer', there was a nurse, and she herself was dying with cancer, she knew she was passing. One day she was looking into the window of a maternity ward. She was struggling with the inevitability of her death.

**SHOW PIC** And she said the Lord said to her-'see that baby, yesterday that baby was in her mom's stomach, floating in a bath of amniotic fluid. And if you would say to that child 'shortly, you're

going to slide through a dark tunnel, and come out into the light', the baby would say what is light?

A whole world is inches away from you, when you come out into the light there's a whole host of people in white, doctors, nurses, all waiting to receive you. And your father has prepared a place for you. The nursery at home of course.

If you told that baby you would cut the umbilical cord, the baby would say that's impossible if you cut that I'll die, I need that it sustains my life. **CLOSE PIC**

And you'd have to say no you have a whole other system you've been designed for, but it doesn't turn on until that system shuts off. And there are parks, and flowers and trees and a whole life you never dreamed of just inches away.' And that little baby cannot comprehend it.

You see what God was doing to her heart! The author said she couldn't wait to see the Father's house.

And so it is for us!!!!!!

**Back to 2 Corinthians 5...**

**2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,** We groan because our tents are showing signs of use, because these bodies of ours are wearing out. We see the limitations we have-I can't do the same physical things I could do 10 years ago, and it's troubling and it's frustrating.

Now notice in verse 2 it says earnestly desiring-desiring our new body for when we'll be in heaven. Anyone here desiring their new body in heaven?

Now we studied our resurrected bodies in much more detail as part of our study in 1 Corinthians 15 a few months ago-you can find it online.

3-4

3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.

4 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. I wonder from time to time what was it like in the garden when they sinned. Cells in their bodies began to die, and mutate. What was it like the first time they got a cold? The first time they cried from sorrow. The first time they felt pain? What was it like when they heard and saw animals run in fear? Imagine the groaning from Adam and Eve!

God's plan redemption won't be complete until all traces of sin are blotted out, including sin's effect on our body. Our new bodies will not be subject to death (mortality). **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." 55 O Death, where is your sting?[fn] O Hades, where is your victory?"**

There will be no groaning when we receive our new bodies.

But it can be hard to fully comprehend this sometimes can't it? So how can we keep this hope in mind when going through our present difficulties?

5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. When we find

ourselves in difficult circumstances, it's not always easy to take comfort in our heavenly destiny because our focus shifts to the pain of the here and now. Our heavenly Father knows this, so He gave us the Holy Spirit as a guarantee. In fact, the word translated "guarantee" in modern Greek is the word used for an engagement ring.

Our present possession of the Holy Spirit is God's guarantee that He will provide all that He has promised for us in the future. The presence and power and peace of the Holy Spirit in our hearts is evidence we belong to Jesus and all His promises belong to us. The Holy Spirit in us is His token on our finger that we'll live forever with Him

Now the presence of the HS in the life of each believer may not seem like a very comforting guarantee, since we cannot see Him.

But we can see what the presence and power of the HS has done within us can't we? We've all experienced His guidance, peace, and wisdom. And since the HS is slowly conforming us presently to the image of Christ, this should give us total confidence that God will transform us completely in the future when we get to heaven.

**6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.** The presence of the Holy Spirit in Paul's life gave him confidence. It assured him that God was at work in him and would continue His work.



And the Bible tells us how we can be confident of these eternal realities, even in hard times. **Colossians 3:2: Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.**

Verse 6 describes how we are "absent from the Lord" while we're living in our mortal bodies. Which means there are no additional alternatives for the believer. We are either in our mortal bodies and absent from the Lord, or we are with the Lord and absent from our mortal bodies.

This is of course confirmation that when we leave these flesh tents, as Christians we will go immediately into the Lord's presence. Remember what Jesus said to the thief on the cross next to Him: **Luke 23:43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."**

**7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.** To walk by faith, not by sight is one of the great — and difficult — principles of Christian living. Right now, the presence of God is a matter of faith. We can't physically touch Him, we can't physically hear Him.

Here's our current dilemma... How do we confidently hope for a new body, while we have to deal with the deterioration of an old body? The answer is faith! And here faith translates into anticipation of what awaits.

We're here, presently at home in this body of flesh, so there is a sense in which we are absent from the Lord, at least in the sense of His immediate, glorious presence. So now, we must walk by faith, not by sight. But there will be day, when we'll know what

eyeballs were made for. We ain't seen color yet! We will hear worship-we ain't heard nothing yet!!!

**8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.** The moment a Christian dies, the spirit of that believer departs from their earthly tent, and they immediately find themselves in the presence of the Lord.

This eliminates any thought of purgatory. Roman Catholics teach there's an intermediate place between this life and the presence of Jesus, or Heaven. Purgatory says that for a period of time - and that depends on how dirty you were - you're required to spruce-up and clean-up to enter God's presence. You're purged in purgatory.

But purgatory isn't biblical. We're cleansed of our sin by the blood of Jesus on the cross, or not at all.

When a believer's spirit checks out of the body, we go directly into the presence of Jesus!

And this also exposes the error of what some call "soul sleep." It's the idea that when a believer dies they go into a state of suspended animation until the rapture, when they receive their glorified body. Bears hibernate, not the souls of Christians. That doctrine is unbearable.

**9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.** Can we say the same? Is our aim to be

pleasing to God, or pleasing to myself? See the Bible is clear that what we do on earth matters in heaven...

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. The term Paul uses, "judgment seat" is a translation of the Greek word, "bema."

**SHOW PIC** The "bema-seat" was the platform in Greek towns where officials made important pronouncements. From the bema-seat rewards were handed out, and decisions were handed down.

**CLOSE PIC**

And one day every believer is going to stand before the "bema-seat of Christ" for the same purposes. Some people confuse the Great White Throne of Judgment with the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Revelation 20 speaks of the white throne judgment where those who deny Christ will be judged, condemned, and thrown into the lake of fire. The white throne judgment is for unbelievers, whereas the bema seat is for Christians where our heavenly rewards will be determined.

Remember, our place in heaven is secured by the blood of Jesus, but our service for the Lord will be tried to see what rewards we will receive.

See it's not just the hope of our heavenly home that should motivate us. We must also remember that we will have to account for our works when we meet the Lord.

1 Corinthians 3:11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

There's a lot that looks impressive on Earth that will be revealed in the end as worthless in God's eyes. Whereas, some deeds that escape our attention right now, will be held up in heaven as precious to Jesus!

So knowing what we know, what do we do with our time on this earth? Verse 11 tells us...

11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

It was Chuck Swindoll who said "... I've got a hunch that when the score is added up one day as we stand before our Lord, many of us will wish we'd played a lot more Risk ... and a lot less Trivial Pursuit."

HA Ironside said "If we learn to live as Paul did with the judgment seat of Christ before us, we will not be men pleasers, but we will be Christ-pleasers.

12-13

12 For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you. Paul was the original Jesus freak! He was fanatical for God, and the things of God.

But make no mistake, Paul wasn't mean, he wasn't course, no everything he did was out of love...

14-15

14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; 15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again." Paul was motivated and propelled by the love of Christ, specifically Jesus' love towards him.

As we've mentioned before, love must be our motive in ministry, because if our motive is anything else other than the love of Christ, we will become discouraged and disillusioned.

16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. This an incredibly significant verse. Really understand it and it will change your life. Paul uses Jesus as an example... On earth the disciples knew Jesus as a man - physically and tangibly. The Lord's humanness enabled His disciples to identify Jesus on the street and follow Him.

But now that Jesus ascended to heaven, we relate to Jesus spiritually. His former physical appearance is no longer significant. The fact that He was with us is theologically important, but the specifics - His height, weight, facial features, physique - are no longer a relevant issue. This is why God didn't give us a physical depiction or portrait of Jesus. His omission was very intentional.

God is teaching us a new way to view one another. Since we've all become new people in Christ, why focus any longer on the outward person? Why not look beneath the surface?

As a member of the Sanhedrin, it's very likely Paul had heard Jesus speak in Jerusalem. But after Paul's conversion, Paul no longer knew Jesus after the flesh, for he saw Him in a different light. As a result, Paul saw all men differently. He didn't see them in their earthly bodies. He saw who they could become in Christ.

**17 Therefore, if anyone** Pause here-this is a promise for anyone. It doesn't matter what age, intelligence, race or nationality. Anyone means anyone!

**is in Christ, he is a new creation;** This doesn't say for who are in religion, who check all the boxes. No this is for those in Christ. Let's read all of verse 17

**17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.** This is amazing, it would be enough if it was only our sins forgiven, but there's more-we are changed by the spirit of God into a new creation. I'm not the same Brian I used to be!!

Have you noticed our God is a God of new things? A new Jerusalem, a new heaven, a new earth, and a new heavenly body!!!

But before all of that eternal newness, when we put our faith in Christ, we become new creations. Not physically of course, but spiritually. The moment we trust in Jesus, the Bible lists over 40 new things that happen to us.

### SHOW PIC

He called us to Himself.

He declared us righteous.

He assured us of glorification.

He redeemed us from sin.

Christ reconciled us to God.

God forgave all of our sins.

He placed us "in Christ."

He set us free from the Law of Moses.

He gave us new life.

He adopted us as His heirs.

He made us members of His household.

He gave us immediate access to Himself.

He enabled us to enjoy fellowship with all the saints.

He delivered us from darkness.

He transferred us into His kingdom of light.

He gave us heavenly citizenship.

He prepared a heavenly home for us.

He prepared a heavenly inheritance for us.

He united us with all three members of the Trinity.

He gave us the indwelling Holy Spirit.

He anointed us with the Spirit.  
He baptized us with the Spirit.  
He sealed us with the Spirit.  
He pledged our immortality.  
He gave us spiritual gifts.  
He empowered us.  
He made us righteous in His sight.  
He sanctified us.  
He brought us near Himself.  
He circumcised our hearts.  
He gave us to Christ as a gift.  
He placed us on a solid foundation.  
He gave us abundant grace.  
He gave us faith.  
He gave us hope.  
He gave us unconditional love.  
He made us complete in Christ.  
He gave us mercy.  
He gave us freedom from sin's dominion.  
He has given us the mind of Christ.  
He has promised us heaven.

**CLOSE PIC**

There's no better gift than this is there!!!!