

2nd Corinthians Chapters 5-6

Charles Dailey © 2023 NLT CPS
Updated 12/25/2023 Printed 12/25/2023

Introduction:

The beloved Apostle speaks next of the spiritual body that will replace the present earthly body of Christians when Christ comes again.

LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF THE COMING JUDGMENT.

(5:1) For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God Himself and not by human hands.

✧ **We live in our tent now --**

Our house is in heaven.

- Paul is reminded that our present **bodies** are very temporary at best. They will be replaced after **death** with a permanent **body made by God**. This **body** is not made on **earth (not made by human hands)**. This is the same usage as Hebrews 9:11. Our future bodies are designed by **God** for heaven.

(2) We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing.

✧ **We grow weary now.**

Our heavenly body is like new clothes.

- The products of aging make us **weary**. Increasing limitations, aches in our muscles and joints are part of the picture of our **bodies** coming to the end of their useful life. Our teeth decay and our eyes grow dim. We don't hear what others hear. Now that we know God has something better, we long to put on our **heavenly bodies**. This is like **new clothes**.

(3) For we will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies. (4) While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life.

✧ **We groan and sigh now.**

True life is waiting.

- Exiting our worn-out **bodies** does not mean that we will become disembodied **spirits**. Even the demons of Mark 5:9-12 wanted to **live** in a **body**, so they chose to enter pigs.
- We don't want to **die** in order to escape our present **bodies** but now we can see that a vastly superior **life** is awaiting with God. The following trades will not be pursued in the next life: dentists, heart specialists, massage therapists, optometrists, hearing specialists, surgeons of all kinds, podiatrists -- to name just a few.
- The Lord kept the physician Luke near Paul for many years and on many trips. Nothing like that will be needed where the Tree of Life bears its fruit (Revelation 22:2).
- When a predator swallows a victim in the wild, the victim suffocates. This serves as a picture of our earthly bodies being **swallowed** up by genuine **life**.

(5) God Himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee He has given us His Holy Spirit.

- Talk about quality! **God** has **prepared** this new body and **guarantees** that we will get it by giving us the **Holy Spirit** as a down payment. **David Guzik** tells of a visitor at a building site questioning a workman who was shaping a block to be placed high on the building. When asked why he was working so long at the shaping, the workman answered, "I'm shaping it down here so it will fit in up there." That is exactly what God is doing for us now.

(6) So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with

the Lord. (7) For we live by believing and not by seeing. (8) Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord.

✧ **Earthly bodies are limited by our faith. Vs.7.**

God guarantees our heavenly bodies.

Q 1: What are some practical examples of walking by believing instead of by seeing—and how do you personally recognize the difference?

(9) So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please Him. (10) For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.

✧ **Earthly bodies are for testing (judgment) time.**
Judgment will show what we have prepared for.

- There are degrees of reward according to verse 10. The amount, quality and motives of our service may be **judged**.

When death one day comes for me,
 I shall go with a smile on my face,
 A hallelujah on my lips and no fear in my heart
 My God will be coming for me and where
 I will be going no more troubles will I ever see.

From Cranky Old Folks site.

PAUL HAD A GOOD CONSCIENCE IN HIS MINISTRY

(11) Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. (12) Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart.

- Paul did not see preaching as an option but instead a **fearful responsibility** before the **Lord**. He was also giving his friends a **reason** to be **proud** of his **ministry**.

(13) If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit.

- If Paul acted **crazy**, it was **to bring glory to God**. If he seemed sane, it was to **benefit** the saints to whom he was preaching.

(14) Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. (15) He died for everyone so that those who receive His new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.

- The Apostle was controlled by **love**.
- The **old life** is discussed in conjunction with verse 18.

(16) So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know Him now!

- Paul had **evaluated Christ** from the standpoint of being raised in Nazareth, a town with a poor reputation (John 1:46), keeping company with men who fished for a living (Matthew 4:18) and having a group dinner with men who collected taxes for the hated Roman Empire (Matthew 9:10).
- But Paul got it all wrong. After the confrontation on the road to Damascus, that has all changed. Now Paul **knows** Jesus as the Lord of creation.

(17) This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (18) And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to Himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to Him.

- A believer's entry into Christ by baptism is more than a one-time event. It is the door to becoming an entirely **new person**.

For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with Him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. (Colossians 2:12 NLT)

The **old life is gone** and a **new life has begun**. We didn't do it. It's all a **gift from God** Who has **reconciled** us to Himself and has given us the task of **reconciling** other **people to Him**.

(19) For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And He gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.

- The **God** who insists on *total* obedience was **in Christ** who was paying the *total* price for the sins we have committed. Then He gave Paul this **wonderful message of reconciliation**.

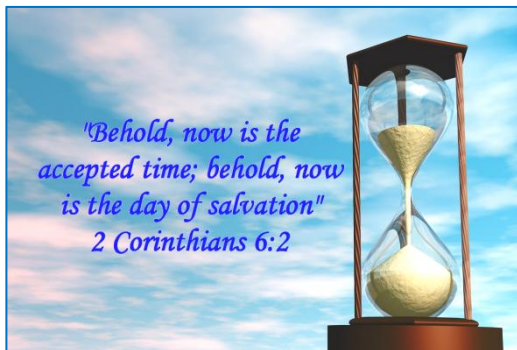
(20) So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making His appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" (21) For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

- **"So we are"** begins a series of conclusion based on what Paul said in previous verses.
- In 20-21 the reader sees:
 - We are **ambassadors** for **Christ**.
 - The **ambassador** is repeating the appeal of **God**. It is hard to grasp that **God** is appealing to sinful mankind.
 - **God** accepted the death of **sinless Christ** (John 19:30) as an **offering** for our **sin** so we could be **right** with Him. The *Message* paraphrase says, **"Become friends with God; he's already a friend with you."**

Q 2: What qualities make someone a good ambassador—and how do those qualities translate into the Christian life?

(6:1) As God's partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God's kindness and then ignore it. (2) For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation.

- It is possible to accept **God's gift of kindness** and then become fascinated with other interests. But we must not do that. Jesus told of this kind of person in the parable of the sower:



The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word. (Matthew 13:20-21 NLT)

- The quotation in verse 2 is from Isaiah:

This is what the LORD says: "At just the right time, I will respond to you. On the day of salvation I will help you. I will protect you and give you to the people as My covenant with them. Through you I will reestablish the land of Israel and assign it to its own people again." (Isaiah 49:8 NLT)

(3) We live in such a way that no one will stumble because of us, and no one will find fault with our ministry. (4) In everything we do, we show that we are true ministers of God. We patiently endure troubles and hardships and calamities of every kind.

- It clear that Paul was describing his own ministry and not discussing the Christian living at large.

(5) We have been beaten, been put in prison, faced angry mobs, worked to exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and gone without food.

1. **Beaten:** Acts 16:23
2. **Imprisoned:** Acts 23:35
3. **Faced angry mobs:** Acts 23:35
4. **Worked to exhaustion:** I Cor 15:10
5. **Sleepless nights:** Acts 20:31
6. Items 1-5 did not include scheduled meals.

OUR PURITY

(6) We prove ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, by the Holy Spirit within us, and by our sincere love.

- **Impurity** is popular in our culture. Impure vocabulary, impure jokes, impure stories all leading to impure actions.
- **Understanding** implies listening to what people are telling us. That doesn't mean agreeing with them, but respecting the other person's right to their opinion. Or it may refer to his **understanding** of God's will provided to him directly from the Lord.
- **Patience** is what Paul demonstrated as even those whom he had converted accused him of many things. He **patiently** reasoned with them and in a **kindly** attitude. He showed that his demeanour came from **the Holy Spirit** as well as his knowledge of God's will. He was an encyclopedia of heavenly truth with a genuine **love** for people.



(7) We faithfully preach the truth. God's power is working in us. We use the weapons of righteousness in the right hand for attack and the left hand for defense.

- Ananias had told Paul (Acts 22:15) in Damascus that he was to be a witness and Paul had carried out this commission **faithfully**.
- In his **right hand** Paul held a sword and in his **left**, a shield. **J.W. McGarvey** comments here:

The armor of the right hand was offensive, and that of the left was defensive.

As a true minister of Christ engaged in the Christian warfare, Paul knew how to strike so as to discipline all real offenders, and he also was well able to defend himself against the attacks of unchristian Jews, etc., and false brethren, who assailed his character as they had here at Corinth.

(8) We serve God whether people honor us or despise us, whether they slander us or praise us. We are honest, but they call us impostors.

- **William MacDonald** captures this contrast very well:

Here and in verses 9 and 10 Paul describes some of the sharp contrasts that are found in service for the Lord Jesus.

The true disciple experiences the mountain tops and the valleys, as well as all the territory that lies between. It is a life of honor and dishonor, of victory and seeming defeat, of commendation and criticism.

The true servant of God is the object of evil report and good report. Some speak well of his zeal and courage, whereas others have only condemnation for him. He is treated as a deceiver or impostor, and yet he is true for all that. He is no impostor, but a genuine servant of the Most High God.

(9) We are ignored, even though we are well known. We live close to death, but we are still alive. We have been beaten, but we have not been killed.

- It is hard on an effective leaders to be **ignored** by critics. Paul had true near-**death** experiences but survived. He was still alive and was now busy dictating a letter. Even his **beatings** did not take his **life**.

OUR POVERTY

(10) Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything.

(11) Oh, dear Corinthian friends! We have spoken honestly with you, and our hearts are open to you.

- Paul experienced a wide range of reactions.
 - **Heartache**, yet **joy**.
 - **Poverty**, yet **riches**.
 - Destitution, yet limitless possessions.
- Both in the connotation of his words as well the clear meaning of them, Paul tells of his transparency. His purpose is presented next:

(12) There is no lack of love on our part, but you have withheld your love from us. (13) I am asking you to respond as if you were my own children. Open your hearts to us!

- Paul has been open with his **love**, but the Corinthians have withheld their **love** for him. He asks to be treated as their father.

Q 4: What makes it hard for people to open their hearts to spiritual leaders or to one another?

FIVE QUESTIONS FOR THE CORINTHIAN BELIEVERS

(14) Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness?

- **Don't team up . . .** is translated "don't be unequally yoked" in many translations and this opens the door so we can see the word picture is from Deuteronomy:

You must not plow with an ox and a donkey harnessed together. (Deuteronomy 22:10 NLT)

The ox was a clean animal and the donkey was unclean because it does not chew the cud. Leviticus 11:26.

- Questions 1 and 2:
 - 1. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? Partnerships** are in view. Potential business **partnerships** need to be examined and potential marriages need to be looked at because of their permanency.
 - 2. How can light live with darkness?**

You can't shack up with the devil and expect God to pay the rent.

- Some of the Corinthians were withdrawn and distant from Paul because they had other partnerships. They had formed a bond with **unbelievers** rather than their spiritual father Paul. They didn't want to rock the boat with their **wicked partners**.
- In his first letter, Paul had made a similar warning: **Don't be fooled by those who say such things, for "bad company corrupts good character."**
(1 Corinthians 15:33 NLT)

(15) What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever?

- Questions 3 and 4:

3. **What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil?**

William McDonald applies these truths this way:

A Christian should not go into partnership with one who does not know the Lord.

It applies clearly to secret orders or fraternities: How could one who is faithful to Christ consistently go on in an association where the name of the Lord Jesus is unwelcome?

Its application to social life would be as follows: A Christian should maintain contact with the unsaved in an effort to win them to Christ, but he should never engage in their sinful pleasures or in any of their activities in such a way as to lead them to think he is no different than they.

4. **How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever?**

- Marrying an unbeliever means staying spiritually single for the rest of life. The believer forfeits the joy of working on a project together with God.
- Earlier in this letter, Paul described the church as a group as The temple of God. Here He applies the same word picture to individual believers.



(16) And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be My people."

- Question 5:

5. This restriction has been in place with Israel of the Old Testament as well:

I will live among you, and I will not despise you. I will walk among you; I will be your God, and you will be My people.
(Leviticus 26:11-12 NLT)

EXTRACT YOURSELVES

(17) Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the LORD. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. (18) And I will be your Father, and you will be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty. "

- Paul reinforces his instruction with a statement from Isaiah:

Get out! Get out and leave your captivity, where everything you touch is unclean. Get out of there and purify yourselves, you who carry home the sacred objects of the LORD. (Isaiah 52:11 NLT)

Q 5: What does healthy, biblical separation look like—and what does it not look like?

- It's unmistakably clear that we must draw a line between ourselves and the **filthy things** of unbelievers. This is part of our development and training. The reward is being **welcomed** by the **Lord** and being adopted into the **Lord's** family.