

A Study in II Corinthians

Strength in Weakness

Chapter Five - Lesson Six

The Confidence of Heaven (1-8): Paul knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that once his body perished, he would appear before the Lord in heaven in a glorified body. Paul starts out this chapter with “for we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.” It was Paul’s confidence of his home in heaven, being in a glorified body, that allowed him to endure all things for Christ’s sake (2 Cor. 12:10). Peter himself had this confidence concerning his glorification saying, “Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” (2 Peter 1:13-16)

The Concern of Judgment (10-11): Paul is not silent on the issue of the Judgment Seat of Christ for the believer. Paul continually looked forward to the day when he will be judged for the things done in his body, whether they be good or bad. In Romans he says, “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” (Romans 14:10). In I Corinthians 3:12-15 he gives insight on the details pertaining to this judgment. And now here in our text, Paul speaks to the concern over such a judgment, “knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...” (11). This judgment for the believer pertains to our work, or our walk once we are saved. It is NOT an losing our salvation, but it is a judgement that will determine rewards or suffering loss of rewards for the things done in our bodies since we have been saved. The Judgment Seat of Christ is a very serious issue and therefore comes up throughout Paul’s epistles, especially as it pertains to the Christian’s walk.

The Criteria of Judgment (12- 15): Paul, still dealing with the Judgment Seat of Christ, now mentions the criteria for which judgment is given, “For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in **heart**.” (2 Corinthians 5:12). The criteria for the Judgment Seat of Christ is the heart. Paul spent multiple chapters of I Corinthians writing regarding those who gloried in appearance and not in heart (I Corinthians chapters 1-5). Paul underscores this reality in 1 Corinthians 4:1-5 saying, “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.” (1 Corinthians 4:5). It is the hidden councils of the heart that will be the criteria for judgment, and it has to be so; for it is the heart and the heart motives that none of us can judge. There is not a person on the face of this planet that can judge the heart motives of another person. But the Lord in “that day” will judge the “hidden counsels of the hearts.”

The Calling of Every Believer (16-21): Paul closes this chapter with the calling, or the ministry, of every believer. We are a new creature in Christ, being NOW reconciled to God, and as such we are given the ministry of reconciliation to a lost and dying world. We are to be ambassadors of Christ to the lost, proclaiming to them the words of reconciliation. Paul plainly states that “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more” (2 Corinthians 5:16). While this is true, that Christ is not manifest in the flesh for us today, God is still beseeching the lost by us (vs. 20)! We are to be ambassadors “in Christ’s stead” beseeching the lost “to be reconciled to God.”

What a privilege and honor to be the ambassadors of Christ, proclaiming the glorious reconciliation found in Christ to a lost and dying world.