

LESSON SIX
2 CORINTHIANS 5: 1 - 21

Having mentioned the reasons for not being discouraged and giving up near the end of chapter four, Paul reminds the Corinthians that our concerns are not to be with the temporal, but with the eternal. Chapter five begins with a continuation of this subject and the eternal home awaiting those who “faint not”.

Paul did not faint in the midst of his sufferings, because he knew that even if his body should be destroyed, he had a home in heaven - not like the present perishable tabernacle (his body) made with hands, but one that was eternal. He looked forward to the things “unseen”, because in his body he groaned (longed) to be at home in his spiritual body. Not that he desired death, but that he wanted to be in heaven more (vs 2-4). This confidence he owed to God (vs 5). Having this knowledge, he was always with courage, knowing that as soon as he died, he would be at home with the Lord (vs 6-8). Therefore, his great desire was to please God because he knew he and all other men must appear before His judgment seat (vs 9-10).

He says that he acted under a solemn sense of his responsibility to God (vs 11). This is not said to commend himself, but rather to give them the means of vindicating his character (vs 12). Whether his way of speaking of himself was sane or insane, his motive, in doing as he did, was a sincere regard to the glory of God and for the good of His church (vs 13). For it was the love of Christ that prompted Paul to live as he did. Not for himself, but for the one who died for him and rose again (vs 14-15). Therefore, Paul says, he does not judge men by their external condition. It is what a man is spiritually that counts (vs 16-17). This great change is brought on by God who is the author of the scheme of redemption. He reconciled the world to himself through Jesus Christ, and he commissioned Paul and the apostles to proclaim this great truth to all men (vs 18-19). Therefore, as an ambassador of God he pleads with all men to accept this offer of reconciliation from God. This was made possible in that He made Christ to be sin for us in order that we might be made the righteousness of God, in Him (vs 20-21).

KEY PHRASES:

1. “We Know” - This is the Christian’s distinctive hope; our souls eternal existence after death with God.
2. “Earthly house...tabernacle” - our bodies are temporary.
3. “We groan” - (vs 4) - Mortal infirmity. Not a complaint by Paul, but a desire to be at home in his spiritual body.
4. “To be clothed upon” - Putting on a new garment to replace the old one.
5. “always of good courage (confident)” -(vs 8) - “No matter what may happen to my body, absolutely nothing can happen to me.”
6. “well pleasing” vs 9 - accepted.
7. “our aim” - we labor to please Him.
8. “That everyone may receive” - to take up, to receive what is one’s due.
9. “Fear of the Lord” - reverence and devotion.

10. “Reconcile” To change enmity to friendship.
11. “Righteousness of God” -(vs 21) - The achievement of God in Christ.

APPLICATION:

1. We have a future hope
2. We should be motivated to serve Him;
 - A. Fear
 - B. Love
 - C. The message of reconciliation
3. How can we be prepared for judgment?
 - A. Clear conscience.
 - B. Do not seek the praise of men.
 - C. Ignore the criticisms of men.

QUESTIONS:

1. How can we “know” we have a spiritual body?
2. Explain “Not to be found naked” in verse 3. (hint: Matt. 22:11)
3. What is the “body of humiliation” in verse 4?
4. Must everyone appear before the judgment seat or just believers?
5. How have “all died” (vs 14)?
6. Explain verse 16.
7. How is one “In Christ” (vs 17)?
8. Based on the answer to number 7, what does “Faith in Christ” mean?
9. Define “Reconciled”.
10. Who are the “Ambassadors” - the Apostles or all Christians?