

2 Corinthians 5:1- *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.*

Paul states that he *knows* something. He knows that the body, or tent, that we dwell in now is temporary and will perish, but we have something far more glorious awaiting us. We will receive a glorified body when we go home to be with the Lord.

Why would we worry or live in fear and anxiety if we truly knew that what we are experiencing today is only temporary?

This entire section of Scripture can be summed up as perspective. Jesus told His disciples before His crucifixion not to let their hearts be troubled (John 14:1). He then shifts their attention to eternal things in verse 2: *“In My Father’s house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you.”*

2 Corinthians 5:2- *For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,*

Romans 8:23 expresses a similar truth, describing a groaning within us as we wait in hope for the redemption of our bodies. One part of our salvation is already complete—our spirit—but we will not receive our glorified bodies until we are with the Lord in eternity.

This reveals an important truth: when Adam and Eve sinned and God removed them from the garden, it was not out of anger but out of protection. If Adam and Eve had eaten from the tree of life in their fallen state, humanity would have remained eternally in a corrupted condition. Imagine living forever with sickness, pain, or brokenness.

Praise God that when we receive our glorified bodies, there will be no more pain or sickness. The groaning we experience now will be fully answered in the redemption God has prepared for us.

2 Corinthians 5:3- *if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.*

Our new bodies in heaven will be clothed in righteousness and will not carry the effects that this present body does. Our flesh was impacted by sin (Romans 7). Currently, the bodies we dwell in are not a reliable guide or compass due to the influence of sin. The only way for the believer to be led is by the Spirit and the new man (Romans 8:14,16).

When we yield to the flesh, or to these corrupted bodies, there is often guilt, shame, and condemnation attached to it. When Adam and Eve were naked in the garden, the first thing they did after they sinned was attempt to cover themselves by sewing fig leaves.

Nakedness is associated with shame and exposure, which is why it is vital to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). When we do, the enemy is unable to use guilt and unworthiness against us in the same way, because we are anchored in the righteousness Jesus provides.

This is a beautiful picture of what is to come. Believers should not sorrow as those who have no hope when they face death (1 Thessalonians 4:13). It is not that we desire to die, because we want to fulfill our purpose on this earth and not allow the graveyard to possess the gifts God has placed within us. Yet, as believers, we can celebrate death because it is not the end—it is the doorway into eternal life with Christ.

Paul says we desire to be "further clothed." Our salvation has already begun. Our spirit has been made one with the Lord and is identical in nature to His life (1 Corinthians 6:17). However, our redemption is not yet complete, because we still live in mortal bodies that are subject to weakness and decay.

At death, we will receive our glorified bodies, free from corruption, sickness, pain, and death. Mortality will be swallowed up by life just as Paul describes. This is the believer's hope. Therefore, we do not have to live burdened by the fear of death. Instead, we can look forward with great expectation, knowing that what awaits us is infinitely greater than what we leave behind.

2 Corinthians 5:5- Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

The apostle Paul says something similar in Romans 7 after mentioning the weakness of the flesh. He cries out, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" He then answers in Romans 7:25, pointing to our Lord Jesus Christ as the deliverer.

The Spirit within us is the answer to overcoming the flesh. It is by the Spirit that we put to death the misdeeds of the body.

The "guarantee" or "earnest" of the Spirit is similar to a down payment or pledge in a financial transaction—something given in advance as a promise that the full payment will follow. The payment for our redemption has already been made in full, and there is no partial payment or refund. All who have received the payment Jesus made for our sins also have the Spirit of God within them, and our salvation is secure.

2 Corinthians 5:6- *So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.*

While we are here on this earth, God dwells within us. However, this verse is pointing to the reality that when we are separated from this physical body, we will then be present with the Lord in eternity.

In this section, Paul emphasizes how he was able to endure opposition. He continually points to the hope of the life to come and the reality of being with Jesus after death.

2 Corinthians 5:7- *For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

While we are in this earthly body, the victory a believer lays hold of must come through faith and not be dominated by our five senses. In 2 Corinthians 4:18, Paul wrote that we do not look at the things which are seen, and now he is saying that while in this present body we must not be governed by what we see, feel, or experience naturally. We will one day experience the fullness of God and be present with Him, but for now we must take Him at His word—that He will never leave us or forsake us and that He is with us always (Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20).

The word *walk* in Greek is *peripateō*, meaning to live or be occupied with. We could read this verse as: we live or occupy ourselves by faith, not by the natural. This takes time, which is often what many of us resist, because we are accustomed to being led by our flesh since it soothes our feelings.

We have been conditioned to be dominated by the physical realm, yet there is a spiritual realm around us that is more real than the natural.

The spiritual created the physical and is the governing reality. No believer should be controlled by their five senses, but sadly we often choose churches or decisions based on the natural—whether the Sunday school has snacks or whether the worship team uses banners.

Are you keeping your mind in constant awareness of who you are in Christ and the things of God? The number one reason Christians are defeated is because we are not living from the inside out—where God and His power reside—but instead living from the outside in.

It is time we stop becoming spiritually atrophied in walking by faith and in the Spirit, and begin to make a change today to grow and advance in the things of God.

2 Corinthians 5:8- *We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*

Paul understood eternity at a level many believers do not. He was not desiring to be with Jesus simply because he was in a difficult situation and wanted escape. He had a deep understanding of what lies beyond this natural realm. In Philippians 1:23, he even said he was torn between two desires: to continue preaching the gospel for the sake of others or to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

When a believer dies, they depart from this physical body and are immediately present with the Lord.

Recently, I sat with a man who was battling cancer the night before he passed. He seemed to be in a daze, and all he could mumble was, “Wait and look.” It felt like he had a glimpse of heaven. I believe some of the hardest people to raise from the dead are those who have seen heaven, because who would truly want to come back here?

2 Corinthians 5:9- *Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.*

Paul's key to success was that he had vision and was single in focus. Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." It will benefit us greatly if we are as intentional as Paul was in seeking to please God.

What gossip would we remove ourselves from? What offense would we lay down if we were truly focused on pleasing God? Many of these things would roll off our backs, but sadly, many believers are entangled with the affairs of this world and carry just as much care and stress as unbelievers.

Having a goal or target keeps us in a narrow lane so we do not wander or get distracted by things that do not serve our purpose.

Another key to Paul's success was that he cared about pleasing God, not man. This is a major ingredient to a prosperous life, yet so many miss what God has for them because they are more concerned with another person's opinion than with their Father's.

I am not willing to sacrifice my purpose on the altar of popularity, and I am fully convinced that no one will fully fulfill the call of God over their life while being controlled by what other people think of them—Jesus didn't.

2 Corinthians 5:10- *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.*

This verse says that all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Those who have received Jesus will be judged as righteous, while those who have rejected Jesus will be judged as unrighteous and will face eternal separation from God.

Notice that Paul is still emphasizing eternal realities, which I believe is a major reason he was able to endure so much. There are rewards—not to earn salvation, but because what we do here on earth does matter.

2 Corinthians 5:11- *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.*

The word *terror* can also be understood as reverence or fear. There is a holy fear that should draw people to the Lord, and this is the context of what Paul is communicating. Paul was not operating in his own strength or personal motive as he preached the ministry of reconciliation and the gospel. Rather, he was moved by a genuine fear of the Lord.

It is the goodness of God that leads people to repentance (Romans 2:4). We do not need to go out and tell people about their sin, as there is already an inner awareness of right and wrong placed within humanity (Romans 2:14–15). However, there is also a real heaven and a real hell, and there are serious consequences to rejecting Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:12- *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.*

Paul's message was all about Jesus, as he stated in 2 Corinthians 3:5–6. In context, he is writing because there were some in Corinth who were challenging his authority. Here, Paul is saying that those who heard the message and whose lives were changed can speak on his behalf because of the fruit they have produced. In a sense, their transformed lives testify to the message he preached.

There are some who boast in appearance but not in heart. Jesus said you will know a tree by its fruit. Is the person you are around bearing patience, longsuffering, and peace? It may have an appearance of spirituality, but what is it producing?

2 Corinthians 5:13- *For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you.*

In context, those in Corinth were again challenging Paul's authority, even suggesting that he might be out of his mind. Deception is real, and what the world calls normal is often actually foolish in light of eternity.

They may have thought Paul was “crazy” for what he believed and endured. However, Paul is explaining that whether his actions appeared extreme or disciplined, everything he did was for their sake and for God's glory. His willingness to suffer, be hard-pressed, and face persecution may have looked unreasonable, but it was driven by love and purpose, not instability.

2 Corinthians 5:14- *For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;*

The word *compel* in Greek is *sunechō*, meaning to hold together or to press together, like something constrained from every side. This is a powerful verse that reveals how Paul was able to endure all that he faced for others—it was the love of Christ.

Paul had a deep revelation of God's love for him, and faith is fueled by love (Galatians 5:6). Paul understood all that Jesus had done for us, and that became the channel through which his mission flowed.

His love compelled him because he made this judgment (*krinō*), meaning to determine or come to a conclusion. God's love was so great that He sent His Son to become the atoning sacrifice for the entire world (1 John 2:2). Everyone born into this world is born with a sin nature (Romans 5:12), but those who put faith in Jesus are delivered from the power of sin and raised to newness of life (Romans 6:4), because when He died, we died with Him, and we are now raised with Him (Colossians 2:12).

2 Corinthians 5:15- *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.*

I have come to understand that the born-again believer who realizes he no longer lives for himself, but that it is Christ who lives in him, has found true freedom. A dead man cannot be offended or walk in jealousy. It is being “alive to self” that produces pride and causes much of the grief we experience in life.

If someone speaks falsely about us, if we are dead to ourselves, it simply does not affect us in the same way. If we get a flat tire, it is no problem for the man who is dead to self.

When Jesus died, we died with Him, but it is in knowing that the old sin nature is crucified that the believer experiences victory (Romans 6:3, 6).

2 Corinthians 5:16- 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.

Because we are dead to ourselves, we should no longer regard anyone according to the flesh or only by the physical body. I believe this begins with learning not to regard ourselves after the flesh. We are spirit beings having physical experiences, not physical beings having occasional spiritual encounters.

We have the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, yet we are often conditioned to define ourselves by our five senses, which can hinder us from releasing what God has placed within us.

Peter, James, and John knew Jesus according to the flesh, but Paul came to know the resurrected Christ and received revelation directly from Him (Galatians 1:12).

2 Corinthians 5:17- Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

When we see the word *therefore*, we must ask what it is there for. We need to look at what came before. How can someone be in Christ? Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13). If you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9–10), then a person is saved and now “in Christ.”

New Testament realities all revolve around who we are in Christ. Some translations say we are a “new species of being,” something that has never existed before. This verse may be one of the most profound in the New Testament because it unveils what took place the moment we believed on Jesus. If we do not understand this, we will struggle to live the victorious Christian life.

At salvation, God sends the Spirit of His Son into our hearts (Galatians 4:6). Anyone united with the Lord is one spirit with Him (1 Corinthians 6:17), and as He is, so are we in this world (1 John 4:17). We have become new creations in our spirit.

This is the dilemma for the believer: our bodies did not change, nor did our soul, and we often assume nothing happened when we were born again. But everything changed in the spiritual realm.

What is the “old things”? The old thing is the sin nature we were born with—separated from God, without hope, and under the influence of sin. The moment a person believes in Jesus, that old sin nature, which was aligned with death, is gone, and we are now alive with a new righteous nature in Christ.

The real “us” is who we are in the spirit. Our body and soul are not the true identity of who we are, and this is where many well-meaning Christians miss it. We focus on behavior modification and trying to change actions, but victory begins when the believer gets their soul to agree with their spirit—their true identity—and then the actions will follow.

If you are defeated in an area of your life, it is possible you are regarding yourself according to the flesh rather than according to your spirit and new nature. If you are walking in offense, depression, or anything else the flesh tries to manifest, it is often because we are living by feelings rather than by the fruit of the Spirit.

Our spirit now contains love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23). These realities have been given to us at the new birth, and we simply learn to draw out what has already been placed within us (Philippians 2:12–13).

2 Corinthians 5:18- *Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,*

The word *reconciled* in Greek is *katallassō*, meaning to change or restore someone to favor. Do you believe God is angry with you or distant? The transformation that took place in your born-again spirit—giving you a righteous nature—has given you access to God, and you can now approach Him with freedom and confidence (Ephesians 3:12).

The goal of the cross was to bring us into relationship with God. Before Jesus, there was a barrier between God and man, and that barrier was sin (Isaiah 59:2). Jesus Himself became the sacrifice that dealt with that barrier, and now there is no longer separation for those who are in Him (1 John 2:2).

Jesus became sin on our behalf when He went to the cross and cried out, “My God, My God,” so that we could cry out, “My Father, My Father.” He experienced separation so that we could be reconciled.

My receipt of my relationship with the Father is rooted in the resurrection. The law is the ministry of death and condemnation, but grace is the ministry of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:19- *that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

The word *imputing* is an accounting term and, in Greek, is *logizomai*. This is a powerful verse that reveals God is not counting or charging people’s trespasses against them in Christ. Instead, He is offering reconciliation through Jesus and entrusting us with the message of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:20- *"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."*

The word "ambassador" in Greek is *presbeuō*, which means "to act as an ambassador," "to serve as an official representative," or "to be an envoy on behalf of another." As believers, we have been commissioned to represent Christ and His kingdom. We are His agents in the earth, carrying His authority and His message to a lost world.

The ministry we have been given is not the ministry of condemnation but the ministry of reconciliation. Through the finished work of Jesus, God has made peace with humanity available to all who believe. Romans 5:1 declares, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Our standing with God is no longer based on our performance but on Christ's righteousness.

Jesus Himself revealed the Father's heart when He proclaimed "the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:19), announcing God's favor and freedom to those who would believe. At His birth, the angels declared, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke 2:14). From the beginning of His earthly ministry to its completion at the cross, Jesus revealed a God who was reconciling people to Himself.

Therefore, the primary message of the Church should be the same message entrusted to us by Jesus—the message of reconciliation. We proclaim that through Jesus, people can be forgiven, justified by faith, and brought into peace with God. While Scripture certainly speaks about sin and its consequences, the heart of the gospel is the good news that Jesus has dealt with sin through His finished work and now invites every person to be reconciled to God.

Paul says, "as though God were pleading through us." What an incredible responsibility and privilege. God has chosen to work through His people to proclaim the message of reconciliation. We are the hands, feet, and voice of Christ in the earth, calling people into a restored relationship with the Father through Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:21- *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*

This is the exchanged life. God took our sin nature and gave us His righteousness. This is why Calvary is often called the great exchange. Jesus became what we were so that we could become what He is in our relationship with the Father.

If you are born again, you are not trying to become righteous—you have been made righteous in Christ. Righteousness simply means having right standing with God. The world says, "If you do right, then you'll be right." The gospel says the opposite. Because we have been made right with God through Jesus, we now have the ability to live right.

Holiness does not make us right with God. Rather, because we have been made righteous through faith in Christ, we are now called to walk in the holiness that already belongs to our new identity. As Ephesians 4:24 says, "Put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness." The new man is not becoming righteous and holy—it was created that way.

The greatest change that took place in the believer happened at the new birth. Our spirit was made new and united with Christ. Now the soul—our mind, will, and emotions—is being renewed to agree with what has already taken place in our spirit.

Behavior modification can temporarily change outward actions, but it cannot transform the heart. The gospel works differently. God changes our identity first, and lasting transformation flows from that new identity. As we renew our minds to the truth of who we are in Christ and agree with God's declaration that we have been made righteous, our behavior increasingly reflects that reality. Holiness is the fruit of knowing who we are, not the means of becoming accepted by God.