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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

2 Corinthians 5.

(2013)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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2 Corinthians 5.

Topics.

- If our earthly home is destroyed, we have an eternal house from God.
- We may not be found naked.
- While we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.
- We walk by faith, not by sight.
- We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.
- One has died for all, therefore all have died.
- For the love of Christ controls us.
- We regard no-one according to the flesh.
- If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation.
- In Christ God is reconciling the world to himself.

The Previous Chapter.

In the previous chapter Paul spoke of the god of this world and the Gospel being veiled, Christ being the image of God and of those in Christ having treasure hidden in jars of clay. The chapter concluded with Paul stating that the inner nature of those in Christ is being renewed day by day as they, "Look not to things that are seen, but to things that are unseen."

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

- In certain chapters this letter is written as though Paul is having a conversation with the Corinthians (i.e., he asks them a question and then answers it etc.).
- Though Paul's letter is directed to the Corinthian church the content applies to any church or believer in the same situations.

If our Earthly Home, is Destroyed, we have an Eternal House from God.

2 Cor. 5:1-7 -----¹For we know that if the *tent* which is our *earthly home*, is destroyed, we have a *building* from God, a *house* not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this *tent* we groan, longing to put on our *heavenly dwelling* ³if indeed by putting it on we may not be found *naked*. ⁴For while we are still in this *tent* we groan, being burdened--not that we would be *unclothed*, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is *mortal* may be swallowed up by *life*. ⁵He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the *spirit* as a *guarantee*. ⁶So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at *home* in the *body* we are away from the Lord, ⁷for we *walk by faith*, not by *sight*.

Tent; refers to our mortal human body, notice Paul sees himself as a spiritual being living within a body, i.e., he is not the body, but he needs the body to dwell in to remain alive, without the body he perishes, until the majestic and glorious day of the resurrection.

In these verses we see the highest expression of great faith. Paul and those ministering with him are not concerned about their life or existence in this temporal world, since their faith was so powerful death was not something they feared but rather a birth that would not only deliver them into a far better world made by God, but they would also be clothed with an immortal and eternal body.

Their thought of their mind and attitude of their heart that outshined all others was one of longing to be delivered from their mortal body and this temporal world to receive a new immortal body and everlasting life in eternal glory with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We may not be Found Naked.

The words, "We may not be found naked" (v3) is contrasting the Greek theory that when the Spirit left the mortal body it remained without a body whereas Paul is saying that those in Christ will be clothed with a body and not remain as a naked Spirit (i.e., as a ghost like creature), but rather be clothed with a majestic royal immortal, eternal and heavenly body thus the reason for Paul's words: -

- In this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling (v2).

It is an expression which implies his earnest desire to be clothed with such a body and clearly shows that in that future state, the spirit will not be naked; that is, destitute of anybody or any covering but will be clothed in some form of angelic and heavenly body.

God has Given us the Spirit as a Guarantee.

The Spirit in the following verse, "God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee (v5) refers to the same Spirit that was dwelling in Jesus which when praying in the garden of Gethsemane was expressed in his words: -

- Abba, Father (Mark 14:36).

We know this because Paul in the book of Romans wrote: -

- You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" (Rom 8:15).

And in Galatians he states: -

- You are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Gal 4:6).

These verses show that the Spirit (also called the Holy Spirit) that guarantees our eternal salvation is that Spirit dwelling in our heart through our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that not only permeates and floods our minds with light, but is also involved in our behaviour, choices, decisions and actions, meaning Christ becomes involved and intertwined in our entire life in contrast to him being someone a person only thinks about on Sundays.

It is that love for God in the heart that transforms the self-serving passions of our human nature to ones that desire to live a life that honours God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Abba.

Is an Aramaic word for father translated into Greek and then into English it is used three times in the New Testament (Mark 14:36) (Rom 8:15 9) (Gal 9:16). The cry, "Abba Father" meaning, "Father, Father" is an expression that shows a person's deep heartfelt connection to God (the creator and source of all life) as being their spiritual and heavenly Father.

While we are at Home in the Body we are Away from the Lord.

Paul's statement, "While we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord" (v6) should not be taken to mean that we are spiritually separated from Christ since through faith his Spirit dwells deep within the heart and mind of those who believe in him.

The idea behind Paul's words in this verse is that Jesus is eternal while we are mortal; Christ is in heaven while we are on earth.

We Walk by Faith, not by Sight.

The words, "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (v7) does not mean as some teach that we can set extremely high goals and to achieve them borrow vast amounts of money (that we cannot afford to pay) and then say, "We are walking by faith and not by sight" believing God will provide the money and bring the goal to pass. This teaching is a total abuse of the Scripture and of what Paul is saying.

Rather the context of what Paul is saying is in re-guards to us being physically separated from Christ, thus the words, "We walk by faith, not by sight" means that until Christ returns and we physically see him with our own eyes our lives are governed by faith since no-one alive today has seen the Lord and therefore we have no tangible evidence of his existence, thus the need to walk by faith not by sight.

We must all Appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

2 Cor. 5:8-11 ----- ⁸Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be *away* from the *body* and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For we must *all appear* before the *judgment seat of Christ*, so that *each one* may receive what is *due* for what he has *done* in the *body*, whether *good* or *evil*. ¹¹Therefore, knowing the fear (terror in KJV) of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.

NOTICE: Paul's attitude to death in his statement: -

- We would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord (v9).

Body in this context refers to the physical human body, which shows that Paul sees himself as a spirit living in a tangible body made of flesh and bones etc. Paul and those ministering with them preference is to be in heaven with Christ than here on earth living in their mortal bodies, but while on earth they will live in a manner that honours God and the name of Christ, knowing that all who are in Christ will one-day stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

The words: -

- What is done in the body, whether good or evil (v10).

Can refer to the following three things: -

- How a person has treated their brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.
- How we have treated those outside of the body of Christ.
- Whether what we have done while serving Christ was done for our own selfish-gain or for the Lord.

This means that the statement, "Knowing the fear (terror in KJV) of the Lord" (v11) refers to the fact that Christ was compassionate, merciful, kind and forgiving etc., and therefore if we oppress or use people for our own gain or deliberately do harm to others physically, verbally, mentally financially, sexually, emotionally or spiritually we will be judged accordingly, but if we have lived to bring honour to God and to reflect the character of Christ by showing kindness, compassion, mercy and forgiveness etc., to others we will be rewarded.

What we are, is Known to God.

Paul's words, "What we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience" means that Paul is confident that he and those ministering with him are men of integrity and honesty their whole aim and focus in this life was: -

- To honour God in whatever they did.
- To be a good reflection of Christ on earth.

Their hope was that the Corinthian brothers and sisters perceive that they are not serving the Lord for their own selfish gain, but for others and for Christ.

Judging Others in Christ.

Paul knowing that every brother and sister in Christ will stand before the perfect judge the Lord Jesus Christ and either suffer loss or be rewarded encourages and teaches the Corinthian brothers and sisters how to live a life that honours God and reflects Christ to others. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians expressed the same idea in the following words: -

- If anyone builds on the foundation (being Christ) with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward (1 Corinthians 3:12-14).

Since we with our own dysfunctions and aberrations cannot know the hidden motives or intents of another person's heart, judgment to eternal life or eternal loss and eternal reward should be left in the hands of the sinless and eternal one who does; the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

One has Died for all, therefore all have Died.

2 Cor. 5:12-15 ----- ¹²We are not *commending ourselves* to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about *outward appearance* and not about what is *in the heart*. ¹³For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴For the *love of Christ controls us*, because we have concluded this: that *one has died for all*, therefore *all have died* ¹⁵and he *died for all*, that those who live might *no longer live for themselves* but for him who for *their sake* died and was *raised*.

Boasting about outward appearances primarily refers to religious leaders boasting about religious works, i.e., keeping the Jewish ceremonial law, holy days, Sabbaths and circumcision etc., today it would be boasting about building opulent church buildings, teaching large congregations, writing multitudes of books, ministering in many countries etc., it is about boasting in outward works, but a brother or sister can do all these things and at the same time be driven by pride, ego selfish ambition, wealth, the lust for power, control or fame etc.

This is why Paul says if he and those ministering with him are going to boast they will boast about what is in their heart, which is love toward those they minister to, thus Paul's words, "The love of Christ controls us" (v14).

If we are Beside Ourselves.

The words, "If we are beside ourselves," is contrasted with being in their right mind (v13) which means that the expression, 'being beside themselves' means that they appear to be out of their right minds and even mad to some. This is because of the Gospel message they teach and the claim that Christ is the Son of God and died and rose again.

Even today when brothers and sisters in Christ share the message of the cross many will think they are out of their mind or at least have a weak or childish mind, but this should be expected since even the Bible says: -

- For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).

Paul stated that he and those with him: -

- Preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles" (1 Cor. 1:23) and that, "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to them, and they are not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

This clearly shows that the Gospel of Christ and the death and resurrection is going to sound foolish to those who are full of pride and worldly wisdom and whose heart is not right to receive the message.

For the Love of Christ controls Us: the self-denial, extraordinary passion and zeal of Paul and those ministering with him was influenced by the love which Christ had shown in dying for all people. Christ showed and proved his great love for us, and for all, by giving himself to die; and it was this love which Christ had shown that compelled Paul and those with him to their own acts of love and self-denial. They gave themselves to the work of their ministry constrained by that love which Christ had shown and by the desire to imitate Christ and to manifest the same spirit which the Lord had demonstrated.

One has Died for all, therefore all have Died...Continued: -

The phrase, 'For All' obviously means for all mankind this is an exceedingly important expression in regard to the extent of the atonement which the Lord Jesus made, and while it proves that his death was in the place of others, and for their sakes, it also demonstrates that the atonement had no limitation to any class or condition of people there was nothing in it that made it more applicable to one portion of mankind than to another, but rather that Christ's death was sufficient to save all.

Some religious teachers state that Christ died only for the elect (i.e., only a small part of the human family) and not for all mankind, but consider the following: -

- If a person is told that all the human family must die, the obvious interpretation is that it applies to every individual on planet earth.
- If told that all the passengers on board a steamboat were drowned, the obvious interpretation is that every individual was meant.
- If told that a plane crashed and all the crew perished, the obvious interpretation would be that none escaped.
- If told that all the inmates of a hospital were sick, it would be understood that there was not an individual that was not sick.

Such is the view which would be taken by 999 persons out of 1,000, if told that Christ died for all. Added to this the following verses clearly show Christ died not for a select group, but for all of mankind.

- "That by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone" (Heb. 2:9).
- "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).
- "Who gave himself as a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6).
- "The Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28).
- "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2).

Throughout the Bible there are numerous Scriptures full of free offers of salvation to all mankind, the apostles were directed to: -

- "Go into all the world and to preach the gospel to the whole creation," with the assurance that "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved (Mark 16:15-16).

Isaiah wrote: -

- "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price (Isaiah 55:1).

John states: -

- On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink (John 7:37).

The Spirit and the Bride say: -

- Come. And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. (Rev. 22:17)

These offers are made on the ground that the Lord Jesus Christ died for all people; they are invitations of salvation through the Gospel of the forgiveness of sin, and of eternal life to all mankind.

If Christ died only for a part of the human family (i.e., the elect) then there is a large portion of the human race that he did not die for which means that those proclaiming the Gospel cannot proclaim it with sincerity since if Christ did not die for all the offer to come is simply tantalizing those Christ did not die for since for them the offer does not exist.

If it was true that Christ only died for the elect, then God must know this which means He would also know that the offer of salvation does not exist for much of the human family and therefore any verse stating it is would not only be proving God to be insincere when he inspired by His Spirit the apostles to state that Christ died for all, but also prove Christ to be deceptive every time he said things such as: -

- "Whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (John 6:37).

It is of no use here to say that the preacher does not know who the elect are, and that he is obliged to make the offer to all in order that the elect may be reached. For it is not the preacher only who offers the Gospel, it is also God who offers it, and He knows who the elect are, and yet he offers salvation to all. And if there is no salvation provided for all, and no possibility that all to whom the offer comes should be saved, then God is insincere; and there is no way possible of vindicating His character.

One has Died for all, therefore all have Died...Continued: -

When Christ laid down his life for others, he died for all mankind, therefore it follows that the statement, "One died for all" (v14), means that we were all dead. The entire human race was dead in the following three ways: -

1. Under the law and the sentence of death.
2. Dead in sins and trespasses.
3. Spiritually dead and separated from God.

This was the wretched condition of us all for whom Christ died: we were lost and undone, dead and ruined, and would have remained so had Christ not died for us all. Paul in the book of Romans states it this way: -

- God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

This is the most perfect example of love and the most splendid and humbling of all Scriptures since it clearly shows how much Christ loves us, the apostle Paul also wrote the following to the brothers and sisters at Rome: -

- While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom 5:6).

This means that though we were full of sinful dysfunctions and aberrations dwelling within our bodies (i.e., self, ego, pride, greed and lustful thoughts etc.) Christ died for us, he laid down his life that we could be made righteous by faith apart from the law, self-effort and works. In spite of our corrupted fallen nature God counts our faith in Christ as our righteousness it is imputed to us as a pure and free gift.

The Gospel proclaims: -

- While we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, how much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life (Rom. 5:10).

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that God loved us long before we loved Him. Though some of us might die for a friend or loved one, Christ died for us while we were ungodly and indifferent to God and His ways and in many cases blasphemers, because of a lack of perceiving the great love God has toward us that these verses (and others like them) shine a spotlight on some in the Christian faith tend to determine whether God loves them by their good or bad circumstances. They feel if life is charmed and blessed God loves them, but if it suddenly takes a turn for the worse and trouble comes they feel God has withdrawn his love, but this is superstition and judging God according to the fickle circumstances of this world.

When anyone who believes in Christ doubts God's love all we have to do is look back to the bloodstained cross and see what it cost the heart of the Father to save us and how much his Son suffered to redeem us and spiritually crown and cloth us with a royal and majestic robe of righteousness so that we could be justified and granted eternal life in everlasting glory apart from self-effort and strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions.

We regard No-One According to the Flesh.

2 Cor. 5:16-19 ----- ¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one *according to the flesh*. Even though we once regarded Christ *according to the flesh*, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ *reconciled* us to himself and gave us the ministry of *reconciling* ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was *reconciling* the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of *reconciliation*.

The words "We regard no one according to the flesh" (v16) means it matters little to Paul and those ministering with him whether a person is a descendant of Abraham, Hebrew, Jewish or born of a Gentile nation, nor does it make any difference to them if they are noble, wealthy, rich a priest, an elder or a lowly cobbler working in the streets none of these things influences Paul's ministry.

Similarly the words: -

- Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer (v16)

Mean the same thing it makes no difference what race or nation Christ was since he died for people from both the Jewish and Gentile nations.

If anyone is in Christ, they are a New Creation.

The statement, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come (v17). Means that in Christ no-one is counted as a Jew or Gentile, noble or lowly, no-one is counted as being superior to others simply because of their station in life or because of their birthright.

In Christ God was reconciling the World to Himself.

The entire human race is separated from God, without hope and spiritually dead, but the Good News is: -

- In Christ God is reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them" (v19).

God by His Spirit came to humanity through Christ and in Christ not only manifested His love, compassion, kindness mercy and grace to all humanity, but also His power, purposes, promises and eternal plan of salvation through Christ. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ reconciles whoever believes to God (regardless of

their corrupt or crooked past). Now the ministry of those who are reconciled to God is to reconcile others to Him through sharing the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reconcile: means to mutually change and join together it carries the idea of two people mutually changing and agreeing to be different to the way things have been.

God's ways in the New Testament are different to His dealings with Israel in the Old Testament in the following sense; God is not counting trespasses against those in Christ this is why the New Testament Covenant is far better than the Old Covenant. The New Covenant is a covenant (agreement) of grace and not condemnation as was the law.

The Christians covenant to God is to: -

- Love and abide in Christ.

While God's covenant to a Christian is twofold: -

- He will not count their sins against them.
- All who love and faithfully follow His Son He will love and accept.

Those for whom Christ died should live to him this is what Christ designed for those who have been made alive unto God by means of his death. Every brother and sister who has been reconciled to God should live to him that died for them, and rose again for their sakes and not live to themselves (v15). Every brother and sister in Christ is called to make Christ their end for living and not themselves, Christ death was not only to reconcile us to God, but also to cure us of self-love and instead excite us to act under the commanding influence of HIS love. It is when a Christian's life is devoted to Christ who died for them that they are able to live in a manner that honours God and the name of Christ.

We are Ambassadors for Christ.

2 Cor. 5:20-21 ----- ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal (beseech in KJV) through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

NOTE; the words, to and be is not in the original text, verse twenty one most likely means: -

- For our sake God ordained Christ to bear sin (Or bear the punishment of sin) who knew no sin, so that in Christ we might become the righteousness of God."

This idea would be in perfect harmony with Scripture since Christ an innocent man not only died a brutal, cruel and bloody death, but also died as a common criminal and all this extreme suffering not for himself, but for us.

God made his Invitation to Mankind through Christ: God made his invitation to the Corinthians and by extension to all mankind through Paul and those ministering with him and is now continuing to make His invitation to all mankind through all who belong to the global family of Christ as they share their faith with those who are perishing.

NOTICE: the Good News of the Gospel of Christ is not something God is forcing upon mankind, rather it is presented as much like a wedding invitation that can be accepted or rejected those who accept the invitation will be granted immortal and everlasting life in in eternal glory with the Lord Jesus Christ.

God always leaves man with free choice to choose either instant temporary gratification, or eternal life with the Lord Jesus Christ.