

2 Corinthians 5:1-11

“Motivation For Ministry”

As we enter into Ch 5 though the Ch has broken the flow of thought really hasn't. Paul has been sharing from the heart with regards to suffering for Jesus Christ being very open and honest about the fact that life in Christ isn't always a primrose path. Oh, God is faithful he's clear to emphasize that, and how that in our weakness His strength is made perfect. **But sometimes living for Jesus Christ gets you hard pressed on every side, perplexed, persecuted and struck down. There are times that as believers God calls us to endure affliction, but God has a plan and a purpose for us through it. He develops things like compassion, character and conviction upon the anvil of affliction, there is a blessing in brokenness, there is something special that God wants to do through our suffering.** Now again we're not in anyway ascetic we don't subscribe to asceticism and somehow think that suffering makes us more holy, or more spiritual, or a little godlier. But God wants to use your life, He wants to reveal Himself to others *through* your life, and as you're broken, as I'm broken (remember we're like unto earthen vessels, jars of clay with the light of Jesus Christ bottled up inside us) through a season of suffering, or by enduring affliction that light breaks out *of* you and shines forth *from* you. **God has placed this treasure (of the person and work of Christ, His ministry and His message) in earthen vessels. and God very lovingly, yet very definitely breaks His vessels that Jesus Christ might spill forth, that torrents of living water might flow forth from us to those around us that are thirsting for more than what this world has to offer.**

and So with concepts such as suffering, the outward man wasting away, and enduring affliction on the forefront of the apostles heart; we finding ourselves (here in Ch 5) falling very naturally into the flow of the idea of the resurrection. **(Which is pretty good timing considering we're in the Easter season, a time set aside to think through and meditate on a little more specifically the reality of the resurrection, and what Christ has done to make these things even possible for us.)**

So let's look back here at Vs 17 of Ch 4 and then we'll connect the dot to Vs 1 of Ch 5.
Vs 17, Vs 1

This is one of those Vs that's just layered with interesting and important information that we could spend all kinds of time on. 1st of all Paul says, “For we know,” and this word “For” ties us into what he's just mentioned in Vs 18 with respect to setting our minds on things above and not on things of the earth. **Looking not to what's seen but to that which is unseen. For the things that are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal “For” and then he shares with us this one example of things which aren't seen that are eternal.**

You see this body is wearing out, it takes a beating on this earth, not only naturally but sometimes through affliction, through suffering, through persecution this body is destroyed, it's of the earth, it's temporary. But we know, notice it's not “We think,” or “We theorize” or “We're optimistic” but rather, “We know” and this word “know” speaks of an absolute, positive, beyond the shadow of a doubt type of knowledge. **There is no room for speculation in this word, it's something we're certain of. As a believer you can know what's held in store for you in eternity. You don't have to speculate what's going to happen when you die, there's a lot of people that speculate a lot of different things.**

For me there's no speculation, I *know*, how do I know? Because God has stated it in His word; and I can rest *confidently, assuredly* on the fact that God's Word is *reality*. The bible says, "*God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*" Num 23:19

Jesus said, "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*" Luke 21:33 and Again we read in Titus as Paul is making his opening address there in Ch 1, "*...in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,*" Titus 1:2 God is not a man that He should lie, when He tells us something in His Word it's absolute truth, God holds nothing higher. The psalmist said, "*...You have magnified Your word above all Your name.*" Ps 138:2

So Paul doesn't have to wonder, it's not a matter of conjecture, it's absolutely certain. *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. The bible tells us that there is a natural body and a spiritual body, we're born in our natural bodies, but in the resurrection we'll receive a spiritual or a heavenly body (remember the key word being *body*, not un-embodied spirits but a spiritual body, fit for heaven.) and As we've born the image of the earthly man, the man of dust (Adam), so we'll bear the image of the Heavenly Man, Jesus Christ **This earthly body is temporary, it is of the earth and made for the earth, the house from God not made with hands is eternal. It won't have the frailties and the flaws that this model does, it won't age, won't grow weary, won't break down. It'll be able to walk through walls, "teleport" to wherever at will, fly, and all sorts of cool things. How do I know all that, because we see Jesus doing those things in His resurrection body.** Remember He appeared in various places at seemingly random times to the disciples, out in the open and behind closed doors, He ascended into the clouds unencumbered by the law of gravity, I mean we don't know a lot about the resurrection body, but from what we glean it's going to be incredible, we'll shed this old *tent* and receive a *building* from God.

and We love that imagery that Paul uses here to contrast the temporary earthly body, with the eternal heavenly body. This body he likens to a tent, a tent isn't a permanent structure, it's not even the most enduring of structures. They're subject to the elements, over time they start to leak, they get ripped up, seams start unraveling, you loose a stake or 2, there just isn't the comforts and conveniences in a tent that there is in a home. I'm not much for camping, and I'm even less for tent camping, I can't set up a tent but that it doesn't rain, its unbearably hot and humid, mosquitoes and all kinds of critters share the space, I just look forward to getting home. and That's kind of like life in this body, it can be at times difficult and cumbersome, but just wait till we get home. **When this tent is destroyed, discarded, when the stakes are pulled up and the tent is folded down, don't worry you haven't died, you've only moved, you've relocated from this tent into a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.** Remember Jesus said, "*Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*" John 14:1-3 You have a house, a building from God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

That word “Mansions” there simply means “dwelling places,” often times we think of our big white house on the hill there on glory street down the way from hallelujah lane, but I’m not sure that’s the way it’ll be. I’m of the persuasion that Jesus is talking *there* about what Paul is speaking of *here*; that compared to the tent you live in here, there’s a mansion that Jesus has prepared for you there.

So though the day is coming whereby this tent will be folded down and be put out of commission (lest the rapture come 1st), again don’t be confused I haven’t died, I’ve simply vacated the premises. I’ve moved out of this tent into the building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Vs2-4

Paul is here reiterating the fact that certain struggles come along with living in these tents.

The hard press on every side, being perplexed, persecuted or struck down, the outward man is perishing, we often find ourselves be forged on the anvil of affliction, we groan being burdened. Not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed. **In other words we don’t want to shed this tent, this body so that we can be un-embodied spirits, but rather that we might receive the resurrection body that God has appointed for us. We desire to be clothed with our habitation (or dwelling) which is from heaven. and It’s not that there’s a morbid desire for death, the opposite couldn’t be more true.** We long to be further clothed that mortality may be swallowed up by *life*. There are limitations, restrictions placed on our present bodies that won’t be there in our heavenly habitation, these bodies get tired, sick, riddled with disease, we’re eager to inherit our house not made with hands.

and Paul says here that if indeed having been clothed we shall not be found naked. The point simply being underscored that we’re not going to be “pure spirit” beings; God has a resurrection body for us that is form fit for the heavens. Remember when Jesus arose from the dead He bid the disciples to come and touch him, to feel His flesh, He wanted to encourage them with the fact that they weren’t seeing a ghost, it was really Him. He said, “...*a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.*” Luke 24:39 and Paul really expounds much more extensively on the nature of the resurrection body there in 1st Cor 15, and it’s fascinating. But I’m just going to be honest with you there are certain things we don’t know. People sometimes want to know, “Well, when does this all happen, when do we get our resurrection bodies? Do we receive them the moment we die? Is there an intermittent time whereby we *are* un-embodied but at the end of the age we receive our new bodies? I mean how does this all come together?” **I’m going to tell you, I don’t know; we do know that even though we live in the time continuum, God doesn’t. God dwells in the eternal, and when you pass from this earth *you* move into the eternal, time is not a factor everything is now, you live in the eternal now. That’s why God told Moses to tell the Pharaoh (when Moses said, “who should I say sent me?”) “I Am that I Am” God is the ever present eternal One.** I can’t say that I am, because I’m always a nano second behind the present, as soon as I am, I was. I’m always one step behind the present, not so with God, He lives outside of time, sees the end from the beginning. My point being that in the eternal this is all a done deal anyway (and I don’t want to get to far into that or my head will explode).

So in reality it's possible that from our perspective we get our resurrection bodies instantaneously because in the eternal now the consummation of all things has already happened and we're just waiting to catch up to it. That's why the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write to the Eph saying of God that, "...even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together (notice past tense), and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus," Eph 2:5-6 Which is to say that in Christ it's a done deal, we're already there, and that's difficult for us to absorb but that's the difference in the mentality of the eternal and the time/space continuum in which we live.

But I say all that to say this. The bible doesn't spell it all out in detail, primarily because the volume of the book isn't concerned with the details that pertain to us, but rather the details that pertain to Christ. The bottom line is that God has it all under control and it doesn't present a problem for Him and it won't be an issue for us. and That's just one of the myriad of things we'll get to experience 1st hand, it's like a surprise; we'll see when we get there.

Vs5

Now follow the flow, keep the context, Paul is still connecting the dots between our light affliction in the here and now as compared to the eternal weight of glory that God is working for us through it.

"He who has prepared us for this very thing is God." God is preparing us here for what He has for us there. There's a story of man who was really going through some difficult times in life and not really knowing what was going on or why, wrestling with God over the whole deal he decided one day to take a walk. and He passed by a job site where a crew was working on a church, and it was all but done yet there was one guy (a stone craftsman) outside meticulously carving away on one small block. and He looked all over but couldn't figure out what the guy was working on, where it was to go. Finally after a long time he walked up to the man and said, "Why are you spending so much time chipping away and shaping that block?" and The guy pointed to the top of the nearly completed steeple and said, "I'm shaping it down here so it'll fit in up there." and God instantly spoke to the man's heart, and he realized that God was chipping at him, shaping him down here so that he would "fit it" up there. God was preparing him, you see it's God who prepares us for what He has in store for us there in eternity.

and He's given us the Spirit as a guarantee, as a down payment, as earnest to demonstrate the fact that He's going to follow through on the work He's begun in you. This word, "guarantee" is a word that speaks of an initial down payment that guaranteed the future payment in full and simultaneously gave the one receiving the payment the legal claim to the goods in question. It's also a word that speaks of an engagement ring, it's a pledge demonstrating the guarantee of commitment. So the Holy Spirit is God's down payment in your life, Jesus paid the purchase price of your salvation on the cross, and He's given you the down payment of the Holy Spirit in your life guaranteeing you the future inheritance of life eternal with Him. Or again as Paul put it to the Philippians, "...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;" Phil 1:6 Or if you'd like to view it another way the church is "engaged" to Jesus Christ and is awaiting the Bridegroom to come and take her to the wedding.

Vs6-8

Again Paul echoes the assurance we have as believers. In Vs 1 he says, “We know” in Vs 6, “We are always confident” and again in Vs 8, “We are confident” it’s that blessed assurance given to us through the Word of God and the Spirit of God. There’s no reason to doubt, to be uncertain, now that doesn’t mean that there’s no element of faith required, with out faith it’s impossible to please God. While we’re at home in the body we’re absent from the Lord; now we have God’s Word, we have God’s Spirit, but in that tangible/touchable, seeing Him with my eyes kind of way we are absent from the Lord as long as we’re in this body. “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” So we walk by faith and not by sight. Which is another way of saying, “We take God at His Word.” Faith is simply believing God for what He has said, the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Between the Word of God and the Spirit of God there’s simply no reason for you to doubt. Now, if you find yourself wavering, uncertain, full of doubt, I would encourage you with 2 things. #1 How much time do you spend in God’s Word? The bible says, “... *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” Rom 10:17 Faith germinates in our heart through the fresh intake, and free flow of God’s Word into our lives. So for reasons too numerous to mention here and now it’s imperative/essential that as child of God you’re taking in the Word of God. 2^{ndly} I would encourage you to ask God for a fresh outpouring of His Holy Spirit to fill your life. Yes, we walk by faith, but that doesn’t mean we vacillate in doubt and uncertainty, the Word of God and the Spirit of God working in your heart and in your life will give you confidence in the promises of God. Not only for the here and now but also as it relates to those things above, the things which are not seen that are eternal.

But notice (Vs 8) to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Now to me there’s nothing ambiguous or unclear about this. The moment you are absent from this body, the moment you breathe your last breath and this body dies your spirit goes immediately into the presence of the Lord. There’s no room here for the doctrine of soul sleep, and nor is there an ounce of room for purgatory. Now the doctrine of soul sleep (that when you die you remain in suspended animation until the resurrection at which time God “awakens” you and you receive your resurrection body) though completely unfounded biblically we can brush off and simply show people that it isn’t a biblical reality. But the doctrine of purgatory is not only unbiblical but it’s offensive and it’s blasphemous. Because the bottom line of what it teaches is that the sacrifice of Jesus wasn’t sufficient to cleanse me of my sin, I may need to suffer for a few thousand yrs on my own in order to fully purge my sin before I’m completely atoned for and can have access to heaven. But I’m here to tell you that when Jesus said, “It is finished.” He wasn’t lying, it wasn’t all done accept for some of those areas that would still need to be dealt with if you died in Christ not having confessed them or dealt with them or whatever. Jesus dealt with them (all of them) every sin you’ve ever committed or ever will commit was atoned for and dealt with in the sacrifice of Christ. and When you come to Christ God robes you in the righteous robe of Jesus, you can’t improve upon it, or make up for other sins since then, it is finished. Sure we need to confess to the Lord, repent before the Lord when we sin, but the idea of sin being imputed to you and the righteousness of Jesus not being sufficient for you should you die apart from not setting that straight with God absolutely unbiblical. If you’re in Christ; to be absent from this body is to be (immediately) present with the Lord.

Vs9-10

One of the things that these Vs we've been looking at today show us is that one's attitude toward the future is fundamental to one's ethical conduct on the earth. What I believe will determine how I behave. and Here Paul is moving into what we might consider as motivation for ministry. and We see 2 of them here today and 1 more next week.

But realizing that God is preparing us here for what He has for us there, that the things we do in this body will in some way, shape or form impact our eternity, he says, "We make it our aim whether present or absent (present with the Lord, or absent from the Lord here in the body) to be well pleasing to Him." Paul is saying, "Whether I'm here or there I want what I do to be pleasing to the Lord." Now obviously we can't do anything about pleasing the Lord when we're absent from these bodies until we're absent from these bodies. But we can do something about pleasing the Lord while we're in these bodies and absent from His immediate presence. As we so often say this life doesn't last long in the eternal scheme of things. We're only given a small window of time to please God in these bodies, when you get to heaven you won't need to walk by faith anymore, you'll see Him as He is. You'll walk by sight. You won't have the opportunity to glorify God through trials, there won't be anymore trials, you won't be able to please Him by sharing Him with others, you won't glorify Him by choosing to lead a life set apart to Him, those are opportunities you're only going to have in this body. and The things that we do in this body we're going to give an account 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. Are we using our bodies as vessels set apart to the use of Jesus Christ or to indulge our own desires. Now understand we're not talking here about salvation.

We're accepted *in* Him, but being acceptable *to* Him is something altogether different. We don't want to use grace as a cloak for vice, but rather we want to seize the opportunity to do those things that are well pleasing to Him. The judgment seat of Christ is that place that believers will stand and rewards will be given. Paul speaks more extensively on this subject in 1 Cor 3. Those things that you've done motivated by the grace of God and the glory of Jesus Christ will be shown as gold, silver, precious stones. The things we do to draw attention to ourselves, make ourselves look spiritual, or to somehow serve ourselves will be burned like wood, hay, and stubble.

Paul says, "We make it our aim" our ambition in life is to be well pleasing to Christ. What's your aim? What's your ambition in life? A lot of people are ambitious about a lot of different things, and unfortunately not a lot of it has to do with being well pleasing to Christ. You know it's entirely possible to have a saved soul, but a wasted life, and that will all come to light at the judgment seat of Christ. But I don't want to leave you with the thought of the judgment seat of Christ as being a negative thing, for some it may be. But there's no reason for that to be true in your case, this should motivate you, encourage you to lead a life well pleasing to Him. Because, "... God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name," Heb 6:10 it's true we'll experience hardship in this life.

But God will reward your service and you'll never even entertain the thought, "This is it, if I knew that I wouldn't have served so much." But you just might entertain the thought, "Man, if I knew this was it I'd have served so much more." We're going to stand before the Lord, make it your aim to be well pleasing to Him.

Vs11

This is the 2nd motivating factor Paul shares with us in his ministry, #1 Heaven itself, it's not only his destination, it's a real motivation. #2 Knowing the terror, or the fear of the Lord, we persuade men. What does that mean? Is he saying that since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and he's come to fear the Lord he seeks to persuade others of his message, his ministry, to come to Christ and be forgiven of their sin. Or is he saying, "It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, and that apart from Christ we're the well deserved recipients of the righteous judgment of a holy God. Therefore I seek to persuade men to come to Christ lest they face the terror of entering into eternity apart from Him where there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, the gnawing of the tongue, the worm never dies, the flame is never quenched, the smoke of their torment ascending day and night forever." Hey, I think either way you choose to see it the bottom line is that as we share the message of the gospel with the world around us it's our goal to *persuade* men/mankind. We're not simply casting out ideas for men to take or leave it really doesn't matter to us. If you don't know Christ, with everything that's in me I want to persuade you to *come* to Christ. and By "persuade" I don't mean merely talk you into something that someone else can talk you out of, we're speaking of you becoming convinced, seeing and believing confidently in who Christ is. You see the message is that Jesus was the recipient of the terror of the Lord so that we wouldn't have to be, deliverance is there, forgiveness, freedom from sin is there. and It's found in the person of Christ, and that should be a motivating factor for those of us who know the Lord to get out there and share the Lord with others. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. We make it our aim to be well pleasing to Him, knowing that He's preparing us on earth for what He's purposed for us, planned for us, in Heaven. Turn to 1 Peter 1 and we'll end there, it kind of sums up real nice what we've reviewed today. Vs 3-9

Prayer Points:

God help us to purpose in our hearts to make it our aim, our ambition to be well pleasing to You. That when we stand before you we might do so confidently and not shamefully having received the salvation of our soul, but wasting our lives on ourselves or some meaningless endeavor. We want our lives to count for eternity. and We thank You that You take the time to prepare us here for an eternity with You there, may we not resist your work in our lives, but willingly receive it. and We look forward to the day that mortality is swallowed up by life.

If you've never come to that place whereby having not seen Him you love Him, you've not given your heart to Christ, the salvation of your soul is still weighing in the balance. Forgiveness of sin can be yours today, all you have to do is open your heart and receive it. It's a matter of turning *from* your sin, and turning *to* Jesus Christ Jesus said if anyone comes to Me I will by no means cast them out. Doesn't matter where you've been or what you've done Jesus will receive you today, just call *upon* Him, and come *to* Him.