

TITLE: THE HOPE & HOME OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER

TEXT: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-10

INTRO: We can easily see why this topic would follow immediately after the topic of persecution of the minister! No persecution can affect the soul (only *God* can do that). The worst they can do is kill us. And Paul, knowing what would result from this worst case scenario, addresses the excitement and even anticipation of it!

I. OUR DESIRE FOR OUR HEAVENLY HOME (v. 1-4):

- A. (v. 1) *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We all die (Jam 2:26)! So Paul is talking about being killed. If this happens, we have a home in heaven! What better consolation & encouragement could there be? Faithful Christians shouldn't fear death, but rather long for it!*
- B. (v. 2) *For in this (body) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:* We groan (to be in straits; sigh, murmur, pray inaudibly – Strong), desiring to go to heaven, regardless of how much work there is to do here and how much benefit we can be to the lost *and* the church (cf. **Phil 1:23**–“to depart & be with Christ is far better”).
- C. (v. 3) *If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.* There are different ideas about what Paul is saying. Obviously “naked” is being contrasted with “clothed.” “Clothed” is a reference to having a new spiritual body (**1 Cor 15:44**), a new home after we die. So “naked” refers to *not* having the new “clothing.” The word translated “if so be” can be translated “seeing that” (or “inasmuch as”-NAS), removing the element of question. Paul is making the statement of confidence that God *is* going to provide a new spiritual body, not leave them naked – i.e., souls without a body (as the Corinthian view had been – see **1 Cor 15**).
- D. (v. 4) *For we...groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.* While here we're burdened (**4:8-11**); we don't just want to die (get rid of the physical body subject to pain), but to receive the new spiritual body. We long for death to be swallowed up in victory (***1 Cor 15:53-54**)!

II. OUR CONFIDENCE IN OUR HEAVENLY HOME (v. 5-8):

- A. (v. 5) *Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.*
 - 1. God wrought (fashioned; prepared- NKJV, NAS) us for this very purpose (to be clothed with a new, immortal, spiritual body). It seems he is referencing Christians – God didn't “create” us for this purpose (which would apply to *all* humans), but “worked, accomplished” in us. He did this by giving His word that instructs us on how to obtain this goal.
 - 2. He gave the earnest (pledge, promise, downpayment) of the Spirit.
 - a. This doesn't mean there's more Spirit to give later. It means that God's giving of His Spirit is a pledge/promise that He will also clothe us with our new spiritual bodies (v. 1-4), i.e., it's a promise that He'll raise us and take us to Heaven.
 - b. It was given to the apostles (miracles). By laying on hands they passed it on (miracles). We have the completed Word.
- B. (v. 6-7) *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight (4:18).*
 - 1. We know that while we're on Earth we're absent from the Lord (He's with us, but not in literal sight – v. 7).
 - 2. Nevertheless, we're confident (courageous, bold) because of the promise of v. 1-4, guaranteed by the giving of Spirit (v. 5).
 - 3. Faith, not sight – this does **not** mean we don't have evidence of Him! We do not literally see Him, but we see the *effects* of Him (physically through His Creation, and spiritually through His Word). We walk by faith, which “*cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” The Bible couldn't have come but by the power of God).
- C. (v. 8) *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*
 - 1. Here he again expresses his confidence (boldness) in God's promise of Heaven, regardless of what happens on Earth.
 - 2. He also expresses again that he'd rather go home to be with the Lord (though he has work to do here – **Phil 1:24-25**).
 - 3. Shouldn't we all feel this way? Outside of wanting to save souls, shouldn't we want to go home? If not, why not?

III. OUR LABOR FOR OUR HEAVENLY HOME (v. 9-10): *This is the “how to” of the sermon!*

- A. *Wherefore we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.*
 - 1. The word “labor” means “to be ambitious; to strive to bring something to pass”–Thayer). It is accurately translated “we make it our aim” (NKJV) & “ambition” (NAS). It expresses our goal – what we work for!
 - 2. In everything we do, we strive to be acceptable (well pleasing) to Him. How can we do this other than by obeying Him? How can anyone read this verse & still ignore His word (especially considering v. 10)?
- B. *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*
 - 1. **All** will appear – There **WILL** be a judgment, and **nobody** is excluded from it (this is why we evangelize – v.11f)!
 - 2. On what standard will be judged? **John 12:48** says His Word will judge us. And here we see that His Word will be compared with our actions! **Eph 5:17**–“*be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is*”; **Mt 7:24**–the wise is the one who “*heareth these sayings of mine & doeth them*” (cf. **James 1:22**–“*be ye doers of the law & not hearers only*”).
 - 3. Can there be a clearer refutation of Calvinism's false doctrine that there's nothing we do to contribute to our own salvation?! We *do* have to work! We *are* responsible for our actions! We *will* be judged by our works! **1 Pet 1:17**–God “*without respect of person judgeth according to every man's work.*” Why? Our works/actions are evidence of our faith (**Jam 2:14-26**).
 - 4. If this doesn't scare all those who profess to be Christians, yet ignore & disobey His Word, then what will?! What about us?

CONCLUSION: Again, in our modern-day context (the current condition of our nation), and not knowing what persecution may coming, we **must** prepare for the worst. We must be ready to stand firm (not change what God commanded) regardless of the consequences. Otherwise, if we give in, everything is useless, and none of these promises are for us! But if we persevere, regardless of the consequences, we have the same hope Paul spoke of here in 2 Cor 5. We can **know** that if/when we die “we have a house of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”