

2 Corinthians 5 - The Blessings of Being a New Creation

1-5 Groaning for Our Heavenly Home

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Introduction

- Illustration: camping stories
- generally, two views on camping, you either love it or not
- some love getting out into great outdoors, tenting, cooking over a fire
- others, all about hotels, comfy beds, room service, daily housekeeping
- our family are reluctant campers, love it once there, not the packing, logistics
- with 8 people, mobilizing small army, 2 vehicles, 3 tents, 2-3 coolers, lots of bedding
- whether like camping or not, passage see as believers we are camping out on earth
- previous passage, weak vessels bearing light of gospel to a world blinded by the devil
- will face affliction & suffering, not destroyed, God working in us, hope of future glory
- this chapter expands on that glory, describes attitude to have, mission we are to be on
- passage fitting, start new year, coming off difficult year, help focus our hope & purpose

1-5 Groaning for Our Heavenly Home

2 Corinthians 5:1-5, *1 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, 3 if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. 4 For 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. 5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.*

- our earthly bodies are just tents, not permanent structures, we're travellers here
- our true & forever home is in heaven, Jesus is preparing it for us
- John 14:1-3, 1 *"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."*
- only possible through trusting in Jesus for our salvation, he says John 14:6, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*
- blessed hope for the believer, yet see in passage, until then we groan
- we all groan don't we, (more the older we get), all groaning especially past year
- groan with physical pain, health issues, weak & frail tents of our bodies
- groan under financial strains and pressures, God promises to provide, still we worry
- groan over strained & broken relationships, feeling hurt, struggling to forgive
- groan looking at world, uncertainty, groan feeling isolated, frustrated at lock down
- groan with emotional & mental health issues, anxiety, depression, loneliness, grief
- all of these reasons and more we groan, yet word carries, different, deeper meaning
- not about present circumstances, but deep longing for something greater than this life
- our hearts once filled with God's spirit, once touched by the eternal, want more of it
- we know God in part, but long to know him fully, be free from our sinful nature
- in our sin & human effort we are naked, stripped bare before a Holy God
- Jesus talks about this in letter to lukewarm church in Laodicea
- Revelation 3:15-20, 15 *"I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. 17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. 19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."*

- have a taste now of the blessed resurrected life, can't wait for the full wedding feast
- parable of wedding feast, ancient times, host provides garments, can't supply our own
- can't clothe ourselves in righteousness, just rags, only covered in Jesus righteousness
- camping can be fun for a time, nothing like being back home in own bed, where belong
- so until we are home, we groan, not only us, all of creation groans
- Romans 8:22-23, *'For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.'*
- example of childbirth, painful at time, excitement, expectation, joy of precious new life
- this longing for heaven comes from the Holy Spirit fellowshiping with our spirits
- God has given us firstfruits of his Spirit, first part of the harvest, all belongs to God
- Jewish feast of Shavuot, Feast of Weeks, start of wheat harvest, day of First Fruits
- 50 days after Passover, also called Pentecost, when Holy Spirit came upon early church
- God gives us his Holy Spirit to give us spiritual life, empower us for being his disciples
- down payment & guarantee of the eternal life that we have waiting in heaven
- we are bought with a price, his precious blood shed for us, we belong to him
- cares about every part of us, body, mind, soul & spirit
- he will make us new, every bit of us, but without sin, so we can be with him forever
- have assurance that he who began his good work in us will complete it (Phil. 1:6)
- if we have saving faith in Jesus we have assurance of eternal life
- 1 John 5:11-12, *' 11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.'*

6-10 Walking in the Confidence & Fear of the Lord

2 Corinthians 5:6-11, *'6 So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10 For 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.'

- because we have his Spirit given to us as a guarantee, we can be of good courage
- means to be bold, confident, good cheer; this is the attitude we can live our lives with
- we have assurance of eternal life & sanctification through the promises in God's word
- we are to live our lives walking by faith, trusting in his word, which is true & never fails
- don't have to live in fear of anything in this world, Christ has overcome the world
- our souls are anchored in heaven with God, he holds us & no one can pluck us out
- because of this confidence of our hope of eternal life in heaven
- we can have boldness & confidence to live our lives for Christ in this life
- old saying changed, 'so heavenly minded that we are some earthly good'
- while we long to be with him, our desire is please him in all we do, Paul's heart
- Phil 1:21-24, *'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. 24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.'*
- Paul longed to be with Jesus, it was a gain for him if he died and went home to heaven
- also knew he had a calling & ministry to serve Christ & the church while on earth
- set aside his personal desire, humbly submitted himself to God, that his will be done
- Paul knew that God had a job for him to do here on earth & it wasn't done yet
- God gives us jobs and opportunities to serve & minister for his kingdom here on earth
- not always big things, asks we use the time, treasures & talents he's given us, his glory
- we will all stand before him give account for what we've done for him here on earth
- did we take whatever he gave us & use it for his kingdom, or did we bury it out of fear
- we are to have a proper holy fear of God, which is an awe and respect & reverence
- for the believer, we are covered by his love in Christ, perfect love drives out fear
- also for us, the judgment seat of Christ, (bema, mercy seat)
- we can boldly approach to receive grace & help in our time of need (Heb. 4:16)
- not about wrath but rewards, want to hear him say *"well done, good and faithful servant"*
- through our heavenly hope, by faith, we are to boldly & reverently serve & please Christ

11-15 Dying to Self, Living for Christ

2 Corinthians 5:11-15, *'11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. 12 We 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. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and 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.'*

- Paul defines & defends his ministry to the Corinthians
- because he knows the holy fear of the Lord, he wants to please & serve God
- do all he can do for God's kingdom & glory with what God has entrusted him with
- not afraid of men, has eyes of eternity, knowing the stakes, about eternal life & death
- people are separated from God by sin, Jesus came & died to pay our penalty of sin
- Paul persuades people to repent & be saved by faith in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross
- Paul doesn't have to defend himself to God, his conscience is clear, rests in His grace
- hopes the Corinthians follow what God speaks to their consciences about who Paul is
- wants his words and character to speak for themselves, not have to defend himself
- Paul wasn't bragging about his ministry, but honestly sharing his trials & weaknesses
- give Corinthians opportunity to boast about what God has done for & through Paul
- unfortunately Corinthians valued those who gloried in outward appearance more
- Paul wanted them to see that outward appearance is less important than the heart
- do we glory in people's outward appearance or what is in their heart?
- they might have thought Paul crazy for all the trials & suffering he went through
- didn't seek it out, was just following God, if they thought him sane, it was for their sake
- the love of Christ was what compelled Paul in his ministry, why he endured the trials
- received & experienced Christ's love, had Christ's love for the lost & hurting in his heart
- should be what defines all our lives, I need to know & grow in Christ's love more
- follow Jesus example, his love for us compelled him to give his life on the cross for us
- Paul says just as we share in Christ's love, we also share in his death & resurrection

Galatians 2:20, *'I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.'*

- Christ died so that all can be saved, all those who believe in him die to their old nature
- all who believe rise again in new spiritual life, compelled by Christ's love to live for him

16-21 New Creations & Ambassadors of Reconciliation

2 Corinthians 5:16-21, *'16 From 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. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.'*

- two signs of life transformed by Christ; our attitude for others, our attitude to Jesus
- once saved, see people through eyes of Jesus, with love & compassion
- people who he loved & died for, lost souls who need him
- in our flesh saw Jesus maybe as good man, or just a curse word
- when we know him, whole attitude shifts, we love him, worship him as Lord & saviour
- for we aren't the same people, in Christ we are new creations, hallelujah
- many people make new years resolutions, 'New Year, New You', nothing wrong with it
- if we know Jesus as our Lord & saviour, he has already made us a new person
- not just a renewal, refreshing, reforming or re-education of our old self
- God makes us a new person spiritually through his Holy Spirit
- made new from the inside out, one day in heaven, we'll be fully & completely made new
- for now, process, spiritually being transformed from glory to glory, levels of growth
- how is God working in us today, what new work is he starting or wanting to do
- God has an assignment for every Christian, to be his ministers of reconciliation

- God is in the business of reconciliation, we were alienated from him by our sin
- God in his great mercy reconciled us to himself, made peace, through Jesus sacrifice
- God has entrusted us with this message, that all can be reconciled to him through Jesus
- we're to be his ambassadors on earth, representatives of his Kingdom with the gospel
- like going to a war-torn area, part of UN peacekeeping mission, (actually peace making)
- war is won, battles rage on, dangerous, brokenness, devastation all around
- still we must go because the love of Christ in us urges us on, we help, bring aid, healing
- main mission is to bring message of peace & reconciliation with God through Jesus
- Jesus who amazingly loved us so much, he took our sin on himself, becoming sin for us
- the spotless righteous lamb of God, did this for us, paying our debt, dying on the cross
- then he rose again in new life, defeating the power of sin & death
- he gives us that same new life & power, best of all imparts his righteousness to us
- so we can stand before God justified, sinless & have a forever relationship with him
- best transaction that there ever will be, our sin for Jesus righteousness, best news ever
- that is our mission should we choose to accept it, tell the world about reconciliation
- we long for heaven, to be with Jesus, but we have a job to do here
- we can do it boldly & courageously in God's power, knowing our home is in heaven
- compelled & driven by the love of Christ we know & want others to know
- continually made new into the likeness of Christ by his Spirit working in & through us
- this is the Christian life that God is calling us to, while there is pain suffering & trials
- they are light & momentary, nothing compared to the weight of glory God's working in us