

ZOOM

"FIXER UPPER"

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-10

This Week's Core Competency

Hope— I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ. Hebrews 6:19-20, *We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf.*

The creed for the Core Competency Hope indicates that believers can cope with the hardship of death because of the hope they have in Jesus Christ. Paul describes that two-fold hope in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 and in the process, gives us insight into life after death before the resurrection, also called the intermediate state between death and resurrection.

Greeks and Romans believed in life after death but not in the resurrection of the body. Unlike Pharisaic Jews and Christians they did not believe in life after, life after death. One commentator explains: "The great majority of the ancients believed in life after death; many of them developed, as we have seen, complex and fascinating beliefs about it and practices in relation to it; but, other than within Judaism and Christianity, they did not believe in resurrection. 'Resurrection' denoted a new embodied life which would follow whatever 'life after death' there might be. 'Resurrection' was, by definition, not the existence into which someone might (or might not) go immediately upon death; it was not a

The meaning of 'resurrection' as 'life after "life after death"' cannot be overemphasized.

— N. T. Wright

disembodied 'heavenly' life; it was a further stage, out beyond all that. It was not a redescription or redefinition of death. It was death's reversal" (N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 82-83).

What happens when believers die? The short answer is they go to be with the Lord. Paul says as much in 2 Corinthians 5:6-8: "Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord." While Paul says nothing about life after death, "clearly he believes that people in such a state will be happy and content" (367). In fact, he refers to departing this life to be with Christ "better by far" (Php 1:23).

What happens to believers' bodies? The short answer is their mortal, physical bodies are interred upon death, and then they receive their immortal, "spiritual" (1Co 15:44) bodies in heaven—bodies suited to a heavenly environment. Another commentator agrees: "This new covering ('dwelling from heaven') apparently awaits us immediately after death and before our resurrection. It is therefore probably an intermediate body" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 2 Corinthians," 2017 ed., 55, www.soniclight.com). It's "intermediate" in the sense that it's received following death to be put on over the physical body later at the resurrection—not in the sense that it's received and disposed of later.

Paul puts it this way in verses 1-3: "Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile, we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not

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be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." Human beings are embodied beings. When we return from heaven with Christ, our perishable bodies will be raised and be clothed with the imperishable; our mortal bodies will be raised and be clothed with immortality (1Th 4:16; 1Co 15:53-54).

Commenting on the contrast between the present body and the future one, the above author writes: "This corruptible, mortal body, he emphasized in 1 Corinthians 15:53-4, must 'put on' (*endusasthai*) incorruption, immortality. Here he says that we who are in the present body are longing to 'put on over the top' (*ependusasthai*) the new body, the new 'dwelling' (5.2, 4) . . . Verse 4 may be read as declaring that Paul would prefer to go straight to the transformed body, as in the 'changing' language of 1 Corinthians 15.51-2 and Philippians 3.21, rather than divesting himself of his present body and then undergoing a period of waiting for the eventual resurrection . . . But precisely because Paul is still thinking in a very Jewish manner, his preference is for the final state, in which one will be given a new body to be put on over the top of the present on, clothing the Messiah's people in a new kind of physicality whose main characteristic is incorruption" (367).

The hope of being with the Lord coupled with the hope of receiving an immortal resurrection body—the hope of life *after*, life after death—is more than enough for believers to cope with the prospect of death.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

1 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2 Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, 3 because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4 For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now it is God who has made us for this very

purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

6 Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 7 We live by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Highlight "we" and "us" throughout.
- * Insert the word "then" between the words "destroyed" and "we" in v. 1.
- * Circle "earthly tent," "building," "eternal house," "heavenly dwelling," and "tent" in vv. 1-4.
- * Box "because" indicating *reason* in v. 3.
- * Box "so that" indicating *purpose* in v. 4.
- * Circle "deposit" in v. 5.
- * Box "therefore" indicating *result* in v. 6.
- * Underline "at home in/from" in vv. 6, 8.
- * Double underline "away from" in vv. 6, 8.
- * Highlight v. 9.
- * Box "for" indicating *reason* in v. 10.
- * Bracket the key phrase "judgment seat of Christ" in v. 10.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. "Tent" and "building" are *metaphors*. To what does each refer?
2. Put what verse 1 means in your own words.
3. Explain the *reason* why "we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling."
4. Identify the *purpose* served by being "clothed with our heavenly dwelling."
5. What does the *deposit* of the Spirit guarantee?
6. Christians "live by faith, not by sight." How so? (Answer on the basis of this passage.)
7. In verse 4 Paul says, "we do not wish to be unclothed," or in other words, "we do not wish to be separated from our physical bodies," but in verse 8 he says, we "prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord." How would you resolve the tension between these verses?
8. Why do we make it our goal to please him?
9. **Discussion:** Read Luke 16:19-31. What does the account of the rich man and Lazarus contribute to our understanding of life after death before Christ returns?

day 3 **EXAMINE** – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

On the relationship of 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 to the preceding passage, one commentator observes: "In seeking a proper understanding of 5:1-10 it is essential to see it in its context, especially in relation to what immediately precedes it, for in fact 4:16-5:10 constitutes one integrated section. It is in the light of the 'wasting away' of the 'outer nature' (4:16) and the fact that 'this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory' (4:17) that Paul proceeds to explain what he looks forward to when 'the earthly tent we live in is destroyed' (5:1)" (Colin G. Kruse, *2 Corinthians*, TNTC, 112).

No question is more intriguing, certainly none more important than the question, "What will happen to me when I die?" Fascination with the question is evident from the growing interest in near-death experiences. The authors of an absorbing book entitled *Beyond Death* write, "For almost twenty years, hundreds of thousands of people interested in the subject of life after death have been captivated by near-death experiences. Numerous best-selling books and a profusion of movies on the topic are simply two indications of this popularity. In fact, in recent years two of the top money-making films—*Ghost* and *Flatliners*—focused on life beyond the grave.

"Beginning just before the publication of Raymond Moody's book *Life After Life*, the bulk of the attention has focused on some of the common phenomena associated with near-death experiences—the sense that one is dead, looking down on one's body, traveling down a tunnel or dark passageway, seeing a light, meeting other persons or supernatural beings, participating in a life review, seeing beautiful scenery, reentering one's body, and experiencing feelings of peace, including losing the fear of death."

Gary R. Habermas and J. P. Moreland conclude their remarks by asking a number of questions, two of which are, "Is there any way to know if these episodes are more than subjective and personal? Do many of these reports conflict with a Christian world view?" (155). The only way to answer these questions is to examine what the Bible says about life after death—not life in eternity but life after death before the return of Christ, life between death and resurrection.

The New Testament doesn't answer all of our questions, but it does tell us some things for certain. Three passages in particular address the matter: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, Philippians 1:21-26, and Luke 16:31. These passages indicate that if a person is a Christian—has a right relationship with God—he goes to be with the Lord the moment he dies. During the time between his physical death and the return of Christ, he waits for the resurrection of his body, conscious and comforted, in fellowship with his Savior and others who have gone to be with the Lord before him. This state is not his final state, which will begin at the resurrection of his body from the grave, "but it is nonetheless a state of real life—genuine postmortem existence" (222).

The same authors elaborate, "Immediately after death, a person will continue to be truly alive and conscious, even though transformed into a different mode of being. This mode of existence is restful and happy. It is not a period of idleness and inactivity. Far from it. We will continue to grow, learn, serve, and progress in the intermediate state, but these activities will not be tiring or trying. Instead, they will be joyous and directed primarily to God. Boredom will not be an issue. Conscious, intensified fellowship with Christ will also be part of our enjoyment. We will know, feel, and partake of his presence and life richly and gratefully. To be sure, life in the intermediate state is not as good as life in a fully resurrected form, and we will look forward to receiving our resurrected bodies at the second coming. But the intermediate state is still preferable to life here on earth, as Paul tells us in Philippians 1:23" (231).

With regard to the interpretation of 2 Corinthians 5:1-5, Paul's opening assertion, "we have," raises two questions: *what* do we have and *when* do we have it? The answer to the first question is an *immortal body*. When the mortal body in which we live dies, God provides each of us with an immortal body in which to live. In the meantime, we yearn to receive that immortal body, so that "what is mortal may be swallowed up by life" (v.4; cf., 1Co 15:53-54). The answer to the second question is *at death*. While some might argue that we exist as disembodied souls between death and the resurrection of our physical bodies, or that we

receive interim bodies that are replaced by our resurrected physical bodies at the return of Christ, it makes more sense to argue that we receive an immortal body upon death, which is later put on over our resurrected mortal body at the resurrection. As one commentator says: "It is more probably that Paul understands the Christian to receive the resurrection body immediately at death. It would be small consolation to know that this heavenly dwelling is only another partial fulfillment

of what is to come and that one must wait in limbo until the consummation" (Garland, 251).

As far as verses 6-10 are concerned, Paul's opening assertion, "we are always confident," based on the guarantee of the Spirit that one day we will "be away from the body and at home with the Lord," results in him saying "so we make it our goal to please him," since when that day comes, we will all stand before him to receive the rewards due us.

The Message of the Passage

When you die, God will give you an immortal body that you will later put on over your mortal body at the resurrection, so make pleasing Christ your lifelong ambition for you will appear before him to be rewarded for the good things you did in your lifetime.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 *living questions* to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your answers to the following *living questions*:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 1 **Now**

Or "for" (*gar*), which indicates that what follows is closely related to what precedes.

v. 1 **if**

Paul entertained the possibility of death and wrote about life after death before the Lord returns. "Previously, to judge by 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51, he had expected to be among those Christians living when Christ returned. But now, as a result of his recent devastating encounter with death in Asia (1:8-11), he realized that he was likely to die before the Parousia, though he always entertained the hope of survival until the Advent (note Phil 3:20, 21)" (Murray J. Harris, "2 Corinthians," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:346).

v. 1 **earthly tent**

Lit., "our earthly house of a tent," i.e., "our earthly house, a tent." A metaphor for our physical body (cf. "tent" v. 4); "this tent we live in" (TEV). The related verb is used of the incarnate Christ in John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling (tent) among us." "The earthly tent is synonymous with our body (4:10), our mortal flesh (4:11), and 'our outer person' (4:16), as well as the earthen pot (4:17). Tent life is a ready metaphor for humankind's brief sojourn in this world, and it depicts 'the instability, and thus the vulnerability, of one's mortal existence'" (Garland, 248-49).

v. 1 **destroyed**

"Torn down" NASB, "taken down" (*The Message*). Paul describes physical death in terms of "taking down a tent," an expression that fits the metaphor he had just used to describe the physical body.

v. 1 **building**

A metaphor for the resurrection body that awaits us (cf. "eternal house," "heavenly dwelling" vv. 1-4; see 1Co 15:42-52). What sets this body apart is the fact that it is eternal in contrast to the temporal tent in which we now live (cf. 4:16-18). "What is earthly and threatened with destruction in v. 1a is to be replaced by something corresponding to it which is heavenly and eternal in v. 1b. If 'the tent which forms our earthly house' of v. 1a denotes the physical body of the believer, it is reasonable to regard the building from God, a house not made with hands as a reference to another body, the resurrection body of the believer" (Kruse, 113). Since the mortal body is resurrected, "building" must refer to the immortal body received upon death, which is put on over the mortal body at the resurrection (1Co 15:51-55).

v. 2, 3 **clothed**

Paul changes metaphors here reverting to the image of clothing; we do not wear buildings.

v. 3 **naked**

A metaphor for disembodiment. "Apparently, Paul's ideal choice was to be alive at the resurrection of the dead so his new body could be immediately put in place of his old one, and he would not go through a period of disembodiment, which he calls being 'found naked'" (Habermas and Moreland, 223). "The nakedness which Paul expects to avoid when he puts on the heavenly dwelling is the nakedness of a disembodied soul" (Kruse, 114).

v. 4 **we groan**

"He longs for a new and better embodiment. What he wants is then described with the use of two metaphors. First, the metaphor of putting on extra clothing to cover that already being worn (we would be further clothed). Second, the metaphor of one thing being devoured by another so that the one ceases to exist as it was, but is taken into and transformed in the other (what is mortal may be swallowed up by life). In this way Paul clearly shows that it is not release from bodily existence for which he longs, but rather for a bodily existence which is permanent and heavenly" (115).

v. 5 **deposit**

The Holy Spirit is God's earnest, his down payment that guarantees he will ultimately redeem us for his own.

v. 9 **whether**

Whether we will be alive at Christ's return or will have already died by that time, we now make it our goal to please him.

v. 10 **judgment seat**

The term "judgment seat" comes from the Greek word *bema*, which referred to a raised platform on which a ruler sat when making speeches (Ac 12:21) or hearing and deciding cases (18:12-17). It was also the place where awards were given out to the winners of the annual Olympic Games. They received awards or crowns that were nothing more than wreaths made from leaves, which did not last. While at the judgment seat of Christ, we will receive rewards that will last forever (1Co 9:25).

v. 10 **good or bad**

I.e., "worthwhile" or "worthless." This judgment, which takes place following the rapture, does not pertain to punishment for sin. The issue before the judge is one of stewardship. Good stewardship results in reward; poor stewardship the loss of reward (1Co 3:12-15). "The Greek word translated 'bad' (*phaulos*) really means 'worthless.' The idea is not that God will reward us for the good things we did, and punish us for the bad things we did. Rather, He will reward us for the worthwhile things we did, and not reward us for the worthless things we did (cf. Matt. 6:19-21; 1 Cor. 9:24-27). The worthwhile ('good') things are those that contribute to the advancement of God's mission and glory in the world. Worthless ('bad') deeds are those that make no contribution to the fulfillment of God's good purposes (cf. Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27)" (Constable, 58).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

At a certain age children begin to have many questions about death and heaven. Randy Alcorn offers these insights: "The entire physical universe was created for God's glory. But humanity rebelled, and the universe fell from God's grace under the weight of our sin. Yet God was not surprised, and He had a plan to redeem mankind from sin and death. Just as He promises to make people new, He promises to renew His creation. As you read Scripture with your family, take note of the vocabulary that makes this point clear: Redeem. Restore. Return. Renew. Resurrect. These words all demonstrate a return to an original condition that was lost. God sees us in light of what He intended us to be and seeks to restore us to that design though Jesus' death and resurrection. He sees the earth in terms of what He intended it to be, and He seeks to restore it to its original design. We may pass from the earth through death, but eventually we'll be back to live in restored bodies on a restored new earth. The world as it once was—as God made it—is our home. So far, we've not known a world without sin, suffering and death. Yet we yearn for such a world. When we see a roaring waterfall, beautiful flowers, the incredible animals God has made, we sense that this world is—or at least was meant to be—our home" ("Our Eternal Home," *Thriving Family*, August-September 2013).

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read 2Co 5:1-10

1. What does Paul mean by "earthly tent" and "heavenly house"?
2. Who has God given us as a deposit?
3. "We live by _____, not by _____." (v. 7)

What Do You Think

Most of us would say that we are not excited about the thought of dying, but as God's children, we have great hope that brings us peace. We will someday be in heaven with Jesus in new perfect bodies! How does that make you feel?

What R U Going To Do

Heaven is going to be amazing! Draw a picture of what you think it might look like. Hang it somewhere you will see it often and be encouraged by the hope we have in a secure future.

Core Comp

Hope - I can cope with the problems of life and death with the help of Jesus.

Memory Verse

2 Co 4:17 – *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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