

The Book of 2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 5:9-10

Session 46: Present with the Lord

In the book of 2 Corinthians, we are studying how Paul dealt with the Sufferings of Christ (SoC). These sufferings are divided into categories.

We are studying the fifth category of the SoC, which runs from 2 Corinthians 4:7 to 7:3. This category is divided into six sections.

The first three sections deal with various objections to Paul's life and ministry being objectionable. We are presently studying the first section.

Section #1: 4:7 – 5:8

We are studying the first section that runs from 2 Corinthians 4:7 – 5:8.

The objection is that Paul's doctrine: 1) brings about affliction, grief and suffering, 2) it appears that God wants His people to suffer, and 3) it is weak and without any demonstration of God's power. This is the section we are presently studying.

The last three sections: 1) deal with the actual truths which disprove the objections against Paul's life and ministry, 2) deal with the source of these objections (from without), and 3) appeal to the assembly to resume following Paul's pattern.

We have been studying verse 5 for several sessions; I want to wind this up and get us through the remainder of this first section of the doctrine.

2 Corinthians 5:5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

I want to make some final remarks about verse 5; the spiritual comforts of the Christian here on Earth are of the same nature as they will be in Heaven.

Every fruit of the Spirit will be expanded, completed and with eternal perfection. Think about it.

Galatians 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit **the kingdom of God.** ²²But **the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,** ²³**Meekness, temperance:** against such there is no law.

The point is that by the fruit of the Spirit, we are being prepared for our everlasting life. The joys of Heaven differ only in degree, not in kind, from those on Earth. That which is begun here is perfected there.

Every influence of the Spirit is a pledge of the life to come.

The work of the Spirit is the evidence of, and of the same kind, as what God intends yet to do. If we are brought under the renewing influences of the Spirit, and by that I mean, if we are made meek or humble by His agency in this life, then we would expect the fulness of that in the life to come.

What a great issue to pray about; to thank God for, to meditate on and study! Spend time with this doctrine and let it effectually work in you. Let this great truth uphold you as you go through the sufferings of Christ, as Paul did.

2 Corinthians 5:6 **Therefore we are always confident,** knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

“Therefore,” or, in view of, what verse 5 says, “we are always confident.” This is what we have been saying, that the evidences of the work that has begun in us, gives us assurance or confidence that these works will be completed in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Even by his trials and sufferings, Paul is not dejected, cast down, or discouraged; he patiently endures because he is full of hope. Paul has a

confident expectation of the life to come, and he is not just talking about living forever, he knows some things about what kind of life that will be.

That Paul is “always confident” means Paul does not doubt.

2 Corinthians 5:6 Therefore *we are* always confident, **knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:**

As long as we are living in this physical body, we are absent from the Lord. But, absent in what way? Not that as long as we are in this body, we have been forsaken, or that God is not with us. Paul is saying that as long as we are in this physical body, we are not “present with the Lord” in the sense that we will be where His manifest presence is. Yes, He is omnipresent, and Paul knows this, but Paul is talking about going to be where the Lord is, because that implies a host of wonderful things that Paul longs for.

Remember, we are being wrought, or fashioned, for our heavenly home, and as long as we are in this body, we are not yet at our eternal home. And what makes a place home, at the end of the day? Not just the “things” but the people. And the main Person for the Believer would be the Lord Jesus. If the Lord was not there, it would hardly seem like home to us, no matter how great everything else is.

Notice that verse 6 is only the start of the sentence.

2 Corinthians 5:6 Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: ⁷ **(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)**

To “walk” in the scriptures often means “the manner in which we live, act, or conduct ourselves.”

We live our lives “by faith.” In other words, our manner of life is guided by things, which we cannot see. We are told of them in God’s word and therefore we believe. What kind of things are we talking about? We live our

lives in the belief that one day, when this body dies, we will get a new one, which is “eternal in the heavens.”

We live, conducting ourselves according to the belief that one day we will stand before the judgment seat of Christ (JSoC) and give an account of ourselves. We “walk” so, as to seek reward at that judgment, and not loss of reward. We conduct ourselves in accordance with our belief that the glories of Heaven are far greater than those of this world. We live knowing we have been redeemed, that our sins are forgiven, that there is a glory, which will be ours in the life to come, and yet we cannot see any of it. The Spirit of God is unseen, yet we walk as if there is such a Spirit, and that His influences upon us are real.

We live as though the work in our inner man is more important than any of the things of this world that we can see and lay our hands on: that is walking by faith. We know that just because a thing cannot be seen or touched, does not make it less important than things that are seen.

We walk by faith that one day we will “see” the Lord. But for now, we do not see Him; yet we believe him to be seated at the right hand of the Father; though we have never seen it with our physical eyes, only with the eyes of faith.

We could keep going, but you get the idea: we walk by faith – which, by the way, does not mean “blind obedience.” Our faith always has a “reason” behind it. For the Believer, that “reason” is what is written in God’s word.

We do believe, and that is the reason we suffer: to gain an incorruptible crown which we have never yet seen. We believe, and therefore we have “hope” of a new body which, not only have we never seen, but have never seen anything like it at any time.

But even at verse 7, Paul has still not finished his sentence.

2 Corinthians 5:6 Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: ⁷ (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) ⁸ **We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.**

When Paul says he is “willing rather to be absent from the body” he is saying that he prefers to leave this life, if it means he can be present with the Lord. Paul is confident that when he dies, he will be present with the Lord. Paul does not present these with a “gap” between them. We go from death to being in the presence of the Lord. That is not to say there is no momentary interval of time to “make the trip,” but Paul does not talk about death as though the next thing is “soul sleep.”

Soul sleep, which we have discussed at some length in previous studies, is the idea that between the time of our death and the resurrection of our body, our soul is in a state of “sleep” where it rests in an unconscious, intermediate state. We firmly reject this idea, and Paul does also by what he says here: to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. And by that, I do not think Paul means to say that we are all up there sleeping in the Lord’s presence, and He is just up there surrounded by a bunch of sleeping souls.

Paul prefers a new body to his old body. He prefers a state of glory to one of suffering. He prefers to be “present with the Lord,” rather than “absent from the Lord.” In short, Paul prefers death to life because it will bring him into the presence of the Lord. That may sound morbid but only if we are not thinking about it like Paul. He does not just want to die, as though he has nothing to live for, but he is looking at the life to come and he is persuaded of its reality to such a degree that he longs for it.

I have a thing that I started doing each night. I answer seven questions. Five of those questions are about that day and the sixth question is about the next day. But one of those questions is about the future, and the question

is: What particular activity am I looking forward to doing or being a part of in the future; and here is the important part, “Why am I looking forward to it?”

As I ask these questions, I answer them as though I am talking to my heavenly Father. It not only allows me to be introspective about what is going on with me, but it puts my thoughts in the context of the doctrine I know, for, as we learned long ago, prayer activates the doctrine.

Why am I telling you about this? Because, I was saying that Paul was so fully persuaded of the reality of one day being present with the Lord;, that if he were to keep a journal like I am talking about, we would likely see that the answer to his seventh question would be: Father, one of the things I am looking forward to with great anticipation; one of the things I am very excited about, is being absent from this body and being present with You.

If you think I am stretching the truth, look at what Paul says in his letter to the Philippians.

Philippians 1:23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

Paul thinks going to be with Christ is “far better” even though he decides to “stick around” for the sake of the saints.

Do you remember what these eight verses are about? They are the explanation of how God’s abundant grace sustains Paul when he is “always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake.”

In this fifth category of the sufferings of Christ, Paul is being spoken against, and impugned by those outside of the Corinthians assembly.

Their objection is that Paul’s life and ministry are objectionable and disreputable because it is offensive. In 2 Corinthians 4:7-5:8, Paul and his ministry were found to be objectionable and offensive because, 1) it brought about affliction, grief, and suffering, 2) it makes it look like God wants His

people to suffer, and 3) it appears weak and lacks any demonstration of God's power and strength to remove the sufferings. This is part "A" of this fifth category.

2 Corinthians (46) Notetaker

The remedy for the intense sufferings of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10):

1. _____
 - a. _____
2. _____
 - a. _____
3. _____
 - a. _____

4. _____
 - a. _____
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
 - b. _____
 - i. _____
 - c. _____
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
 - iii. _____
 - iv. _____
 - v. _____
 - vi. _____

The remedy for the threat of death (2 Cor. 5:11):

1. _____

a. _____

2. _____

a. _____

3. _____

a. _____

4. _____

a. _____

i. _____

ii. _____

b. _____

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

iv. _____

v. _____

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The Most Important Decision