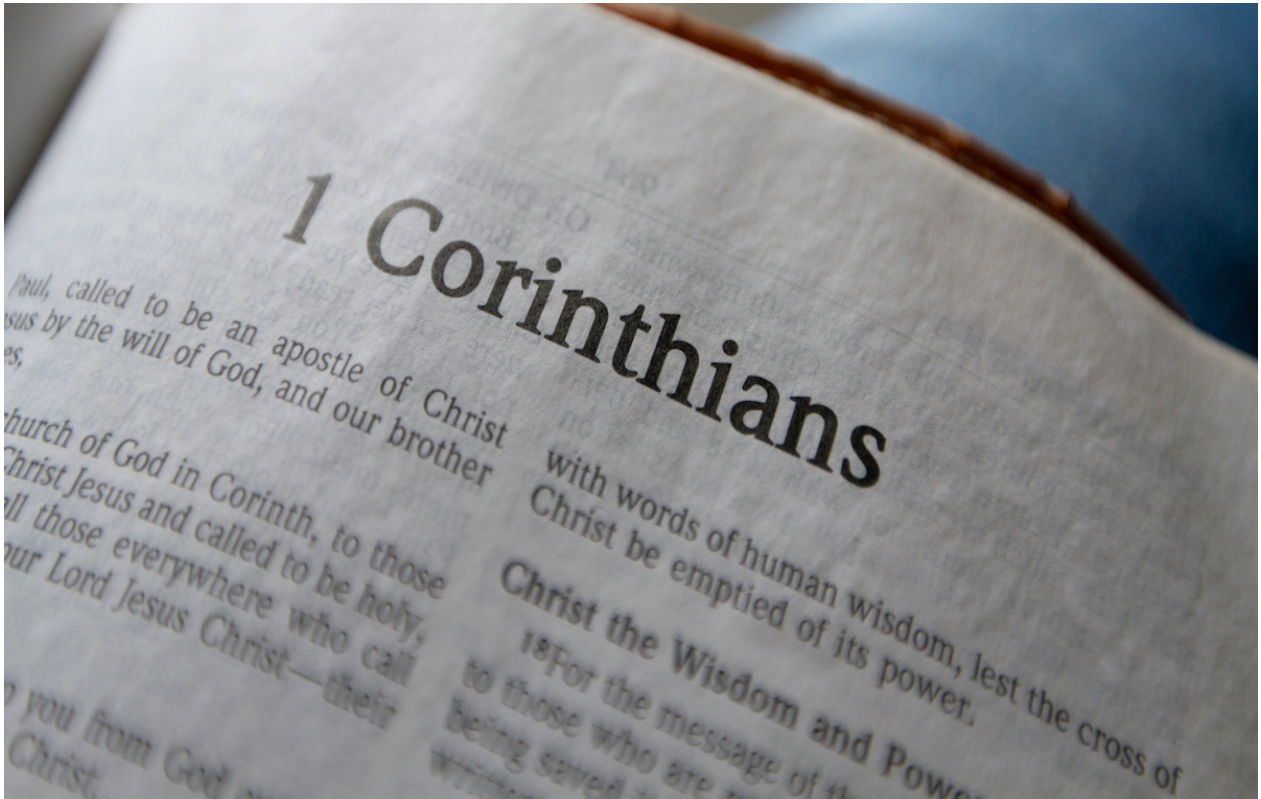


# All Things New!

2 Corinthians 5  
1 and 2 Corinthians Part 22



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

All Things New!: 2 Corinthians 5  
1 and 2 Corinthians Part 21  
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## Introduction to *2 Corinthians 5*

In 2 Corinthians 5 it is clear Paul has our eternal destiny in mind. He promises that, having endured a form of purgation (v. 10), we shall receive a new body, prepared for us in heaven and made not by hands but by the Word of God (vv. 1-3). This leads to the end of human mortality, for then we shall live forever (v. 4). God is even now preparing this for us, and He has given us His Spirit as a “guarantee” of much more to come (v. 5).

For now, that we may be pleasing to God and fulfill our callings as His ambassadors (v. 20), we look to Jesus (v. 16) and join with Him in His work of making all things new (v. 18). We strive to increase in righteousness, knowing that eternal righteousness—the righteousness of Jesus—will be ours forever with Him (v. 21).

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We hope you find this study instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

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## 1 Longing for Life

*Pray Psalm 40.1-3.*

I waited patiently for the LORD;  
And He inclined to me,  
And heard my cry.  
He also brought me up out of a horrible pit,  
Out of the miry clay,  
And set my feet upon a rock,  
And established my steps.  
He has put a new song in my mouth—  
Praise to our God;  
Many will see *it* and fear,  
And will trust in the LORD.

*Sing Psalm 40.1-3.*

(Dix: *For the Beauty of the Earth*)

I waited patiently for God; He inclined and heard my cry,  
lifted me up above the sod, set me on a Rock on high!  
New songs in my mouth He gave; may He through me many save.

*Read and meditate on 2 Corinthians 5.1-5.*

*Preparation*

1. What do we have beyond this present mortality?
2. What happens when we die?

*Meditation*

Note how Paul distinguishes between “life” and “mortality” (v. 4). These are not the same, although, in our secular age, they are typically equated. “Mortality” refers to life in our “earthly house” (v. 1), that is, our body of flesh. “Life” refers to what we possess after “mortality” has run its course; “life” is to be “clothed with our habitation which is from heaven” (v. 2).

Except that we are even now, here in our mortal flesh, beginning to participate in that life through the knowledge of Jesus Christ (Jn. 17.3). Heaven has come down to us, and glory fills our souls so that the earthen vessels of our mortal bodies become agents of eternal grace to a dying world. We rejoice having already overcome our mortality by the life we have in Jesus.

And yet we groan, longing to be fully and finally clothed with life. We shall have to pass through a season of purification on the way to that (1 Cor. 3.11-15), but it will be brief, no more than the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15.51-54). Knowing the eternal joy that awaits beyond the veil of mortality, we groan with longing, looking into the unseen realm and eagerly anticipating the day when what remains of our mortality will be swallowed up by life (v. 4).

How do we know this? How can we be so sure? God has told us. Jesus has opened the way through the veil of mortality. And we have the Spirit of God as a down payment of life (v. 5); He is the guarantee that we have entered within the veil and shall dwell with the Lord in life forever.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Paul posed this premise: “...if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed...” (2 Cor. 5.1), knowing full well that

it will be destroyed. His purpose was not to deal with whether this was true, but to prove that all God's words are true. So true, in fact, that He has given us His Holy Spirit as a Guarantee, a Comforter, and a Reiterator of all that has been spoken to us beforehand; and to be with us until all comes to fruition.

“God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light” (Gen. 1.3). In the beginning it was so, and it is still so today. “Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides. They continue this day according to Your ordinances, for all are Your servants” (Ps. 119.89-91). Creation spoken and guaranteed.

Isaiah prophesied, “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His Name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...” (Is. 9.6, 7).

“Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord’” (Lk. 2.10, 11). John the Baptist said of this One, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jn. 1.29). Jesus' arrival promised and guaranteed.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (Jn. 3.14, 15). “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself” (Jn. 12.32). His ghastly, saving death foretold. Guaranteed.

“But the angel answered and said... ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said’” (Matt. 28.5, 6). His guaranteed resurrection accomplished just as He said it would be.

“And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail” (Lk. 16.17).

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Lk. 21.33).

“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever” (Is. 40.8). His word is guaranteed to never fail. It never has, and it never will.

When God says something, we must believe and act on it because it is true, it will stand, and it will come to pass. Therefore, “knowing the eternal joy that awaits beyond the veil of mortality, we groan with longing, looking into the unseen realm and eagerly anticipating the day when what remains of our mortality will be swallowed up by life.” Satisfaction guaranteed, forever, with an eternal life-warranty.

*For reflection*

1. Why is it important for us to hold to the distinction between “mortality” and “life”?
2. How does the Holy Spirit serve as our guarantee of life when our mortality is through?
3. How does the Spirit guarantee that we have life already, even before our mortality is through?

*In our Father's house there are many mansions, whose Builder and Maker is God. The happiness of the future state is what God has prepared for those that love him: everlasting habitations, not like the earthly tabernacles, the poor cottages of clay, in which our souls now dwell... Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on 2 Corinthians 5.1-8*

*Pray Psalm 40.9-13.*

Pray that God will give you an opportunity today to encourage a fellow believer with the promise of life. Ask God to let you share the hope you have in Him with a friend or neighbor whose face is still veiled to life in Jesus Christ.

*Sing Psalm 40.9-13.*

(Dix: *For the Beauty of the Earth*)

LORD, Your truth will I proclaim to Your people gathered 'round,  
nor will I my lips restrain—let Your precious ways resound!  
Of Your saving grace and Word I would speak, most loving LORD.

Keep Your mercy not from me; let Your love and truth prevail.  
Evil and iniquity make my trembling heart to fail.  
LORD, be pleased to rescue me! Let my shelter with You be.

## 2 Walk This Way

*Pray Psalm 25.1-3.*

To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.  
O my God, I trust in You;  
Let me not be ashamed;  
Let not my enemies triumph over me.  
Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed;  
Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.

*Sing Psalm 25.1-3.*

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

I lift my soul to You; O LORD, in You I trust.  
Let me not come to shame, nor let my foes o'er me exult.

All they who wait on You shall never come to shame.  
Yet they to shame shall come who stand against Your holy Name.

*Read 2 Corinthians 5.1-8; meditate on verses 6-8.*

*Preparation*

1. Of what was Paul confident?
2. How must we walk while we are still in the body?

*Meditation*

Our passage begins with the word “so” or “therefore”, and this tells us that what follows is building on what went before. Paul has just said that God has given us His Spirit as a down payment on our living eternally with Him in glory. Because we can know the Spirit as He is at work within us, willing and doing of God’s good pleasure (Phil. 2.13), we are confident that what God has promised, He will perform. For now, we dwell in this bodily tent, this earthen vessel; one day we will dwell in the Presence of the Lord (v. 6).

So we are confident now in God and His Word and promises. But we will be “well pleased” when we have left this body and are “present with the Lord” (v. 8).

But the Lord even now is present with us, dwelling in us by His Word and Spirit. We cannot see Him there, but we believe God’s Word to be true. So we walk “by faith”, that is, trusting in what God has spoken to us in His Word, rather than “by sight” (v. 7). But what does that mean?

“Walk” is one of Paul’s favorite tropes for the life of faith. It suggests a journey on which we make progress toward a destination which we can only see in our mind’s eye. We go forward step by step, day by day, as we keep that destination in mind and pay careful attention to the map provided for our way. Our journey is not defined by the things we can “see” along the way; it is defined by our destination—the eternal Presence of the Lord. We conduct our lives each day with that end in view, making steady progress toward that end and preparing to be received in that home as we go. There we will be “well pleased” indeed, glad to leave this frail flesh behind to be clothed with glory and face-to-face with the Lord.

So walk on, brethren, keeping one eye on the far horizon and one on the map of God’s Word.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.*

When we are able to walk this way, to be more desirous of being with the Lord than to be living here on

earth, certainly the things of earth will hold less sway and import over our lives.

“Whom have I in heaven but You?  
And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.  
My flesh and my heart fail; but God  
is the strength of my heart and my portion forever” (Ps. 73.25, 26).

“No one is holy like the LORD, for there is none besides You,  
nor is there any rock like our God” (1 Sam. 2.2).

“You are my portion, O LORD;  
I have said that I would keep Your words” (Ps. 119.57).

You have heard the trope, “He’s so heavenly minded that he’s no earthly good”;  
but I would like to suggest, that if this heavenly minded person was so focused on, and in love with Jesus  
Christ, with his mind and desires and goals and purpose all wrapped up in Him, then he would be the person  
I would most like to know on earth.

This person would be set on pilgrimage, from earth to heaven, and living to please only the “High and Lofty  
One who inhabits eternity” (Is. 57.15). He would have inclined his heart to follow God’s decrees to the very  
end (Ps. 119.112). He would be imitating Paul (1 Cor. 11.1) and God (Eph. 5.1).

He would be the best this world had to offer.  
He would be walking by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5.7).

He would be pleasing to God. For “without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Heb. 11.6).

“Walk This Way” and know the peace of God, and confidence (2 Cor. 5.6, 8) to carry you through the earthly  
here and now to the eternal, heavenly there and then.

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face;  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace.*  
(Helen H. Lemmel, 1922)

*For reflection*

1. What will it mean for you to walk by faith and not by sight today?
2. What do you do to turn your eyes upon Jesus throughout the day?
3. How would you explain to a new believer what it means to walk by faith?

*And though God is with us here, by his Spirit, and in his ordinances, yet we are not with him as we hope to be. Faith is for this  
world, and sight is for the other world. It is our duty, and it will be our interest, to walk by faith, till we live by sight. Matthew  
Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on 2 Corinthians 5.1-8*

*Pray Psalm 25.4-9.*

Pray for the Lord’s guidance. Ask Him to unfold His Word before you so that you walk by faith in what He  
commands and promises. Ask Him to instruct and guide you for all this day’s work.



*Sing Psalm 25.4-9.*

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

Make me to know Your ways, teach me Your paths, O LORD!  
My Savior, all day long I wait and seek You in Your Word.

Remember mercy, LORD, and steadfast love to me!  
But all my sins before You let them not remembered be!

My sins have been of old, Your love is new each day;  
according to Your goodness, LORD, regard my sinful way.

Upright and good are You, You lead us in Your way.  
The humble You instruct in truth and guide him day by day.

### 3 Take Aim

*Pray Psalm 84.8-12.*

O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;

Give ear, O God of Jacob!

*Selab*

O God, behold our shield,

And look upon the face of Your anointed.

For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand.

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God

Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield;

The LORD will give grace and glory;

No good *thing* will He withhold

From those who walk uprightly.

O LORD of hosts,

Blessed *is* the man who trusts in You!

*Sing Psalm 84.8-12.*

(Holy Manna: *Brethren, We Have Met to Worship*)

LORD of hosts, my prayer receiving, hear me, help me by Your grace!

In Your courts I stand believing; turn to me Your glorious face!

LORD, our sun, our shield, our glory, no good thing will You deny

to those who proclaim Your story, and who on Your grace rely.

*Read 2 Corinthians 5.1-11; meditate on verses 9-11.*

*Preparation*

1. What was Paul's aim in life?

2. What did he do in view of the coming judgment?

*Meditation*

Lexicographers Louw and Nida explain the deeper sense of the NKJV's "make it our aim": "to earnestly aspire to something, implying strong ambition for some goal - to aspire to, to make something one's ambition to." Today we might use a term like "driving force" or "consuming passion". What was Paul's aim? Simply, "to be well pleasing to Him" (v. 9).

This is the work of the Holy Spirit (Phil. 2.13). We must apply ourselves with all diligence, of course, to learning God's will, bringing our desires into line with His, and walking by faith rather than by sight. But ultimately, we need the Spirit to fill and transform us day by day.

We want our works to be received by Jesus with "Well done, good and faithful servant." We know there will always be some lingering sinfulness that must be purged (v. 10), but that will be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. When we come before Jesus, we will not fear His wrath (v. 11), but we will long to be clothed with Him and with glory, to be like Him because we will see Him as He is.

Those who have not repented and surrendered to Jesus face a terrible destiny. Knowing the terror they will one day face, we must do all we can to persuade those to whom the Lord sends us to repent and believe the Gospel (v. 11). This is well-pleasing to God and thus ought to be what we aim at day by day.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

“We make it our aim”, in every circumstance, “to be well pleasing to Him” (2 Cor. 5.9).

“My heart is set on keeping Your decrees to the very end” (Ps. 119.112 NIV).

“I will run the course of Your commandments, for You shall enlarge my heart” (Ps. 119.32).

“I will love You, O LORD, my strength” (Ps. 18.1).

“Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God” (Deut. 12.28).

“Set your hearts...on all the words of this law. For it is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life...” (Deut. 32.46, 47).

“Now therefore, put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD God of Israel” (Josh. 24.23).

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Ps. 51.10).

“I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3.14).

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4.7).

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed...” (Rom. 1.16, 17).

Our hearts are set. We observe and obey the commandments of God. We put out of our lives anything that is displeasing to God. We repent of our sins, turn away from them, and walk on a new path. We press on in faithfulness to serve Him to the end. We know the terror of a displeased, righteous God, so we wholly strive to persuade others to fully follow Him. Nothing is more important, nothing supersedes it.

“This is well-pleasing to God and thus ought to be what we aim at day by day.”

*For reflection*

1. How do you “take aim” on pleasing the Lord each day?

2. “If you aim at nothing, you’ll hit it every time.” How does this apply to your walk with and work for the Lord?

3. How can you encourage your fellow believers to make it their aim to be always pleasing to the Lord?

*We should not make ourselves, but Christ, the end of our living and actions. A Christian’s life should be devoted to Christ. Alas, how many show the worthlessness of their professed faith and love, by living to themselves and to the world!. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on 2 Corinthians 5.9-11*

*Pray Psalm 84.1-7.*

Ask the Lord to renew and enlarge your vision of Jesus, exalted in glory. Call on Him to keep that vision before you throughout the day, that all your journey may be defined by the end you seek—to see Jesus face to face.

*Sing Psalm 84.1-7.*

(Holy Manna: *Brethren, We Have Met to Worship*)

LORD of hosts, how sweet Your dwelling; how my soul longs for Your courts!

Let my soul with joy keep telling of Your grace forevermore.

*All Things New!: 2 Corinthians 5*

Like a bird upon the altar, let my life to You belong.  
Blessed are they who never falter as they praise Your grace with song!

Blessed are they whose strength is founded in Your strength, O LORD above.  
All whose hearts in You are grounded journey in Your strength and love.  
Though they weep with tears of sadness, grace shall all their way sustain.  
In Your Presence, filled with gladness, they shall conquer all their pain.

## 4 Living for Jesus

*Pray Psalm 27.11-13.*

Teach me Your way, O LORD,  
And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies.  
Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries;  
For false witnesses have risen against me,  
And such as breathe out violence.  
*I would have lost heart*, unless I had believed  
That I would see the goodness of the LORD  
In the land of the living.

*Sing Psalm 27.11-13.*

(St. Denio: *Immortal, Invisible God Only Wise*)

LORD, teach us; LORD, lead us because of our foes!  
Hear, LORD, when we plead for release from their woes.  
Had we not believed all Your goodness to see,  
our heart sorely grieved and in turmoil would be.

*Read 2 Corinthians 5.1-15; meditate on verses 12-15.*

*Preparation*

1. Why did Paul want the Corinthians to be able to boast in him?
2. How are we who believe supposed to live?

*Meditation*

Paul wanted the Corinthians to speak up against those false apostles who, apparently, were still harassing the churches. These men boasted in outward appearances: “Look how many people are coming to our meetings!” But they did not have a heart for the Lord, only for their own interests (v. 12). The Corinthians knew Paul’s heart was both for God and for them (v. 13); gladly would he spend and be spent on their behalf (2 Cor. 12.15).

The false apostles were living for themselves, whereas they should have been dying to themselves and living for Jesus (vv. 14, 15). But what does it mean to live for Jesus?

Paul unfolded the answer to that question through these two epistles. Living for Jesus means seeking unity in Him, not division. Those who are living for Jesus are not content to remain babes in the Lord. They have the mind of Christ and therefore want to grow, identify and fulfill their calling, discover and use their gifts, increase in love, do everything for God’s glory, contribute praise and worship to the community, help keep one another focused on the Lord’s return, comfort and encourage one another, become a fragrance of Jesus to their world, and concentrate on unseen things so that they can be effective vessels for the grace of God.

This is what Paul taught, and it’s how he lived when he was among the Corinthians. If we have died with Jesus to our old sinful selves (v. 14), then let us live for Jesus in the resurrection life of His Spirit (v. 15). We want Jesus to increase in and through us and our old selves to decrease day by day (Jn. 3.30). What a glorious and thrilling prospect! That we might be daily transformed, from glory to glory, into the image of Jesus Christ so that whatever we do will be for the glory of God (2 Cor. 3.12-18; 1 Cor. 10.31).

No amount of false teaching can persuade one who is living for Jesus to live any other way.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

“And God spoke all these words, saying:

‘I AM the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me’” (Ex. 20.1-3). He then went on to spell out what living in His kingdom looks like for every believer, in all time—past, present, future—and how we show Him our love and thankfulness for what He has done for us (Ex. 20.1-17).

And now, He has given us Jesus, the One Who died for all, because all are dead in their trespasses and sins (Rom. 3.23; 6.23).

Because He has done this for us, we must no longer live for ourselves, but for Him Who died and rose again for us (2 Cor. 5.15). To cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 Jn. 1.9).

Very clear, this should be, and understandable because “when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away” (2 Cor. 3.16), enabling us to see the truth of the Gospel. Therefore, our complete aim then is “to be pleasing to Him” (2 Cor. 5.9). “For the love of Christ compels us” (2 Cor. 5.14), aims us, and directs us to “be daily transformed, from glory to glory, into the image of Jesus Christ so that whatever we do will be for the glory of God.”

*Living for Jesus a life that is true,  
Striving to please Him in all that I do;  
Yielding allegiance, gladhearted and free,  
This is the pathway of blessing for me.*

*Living for Jesus through earth’s little while,  
My dearest treasure, the light of His smile;  
Seeking the lost ones He died to redeem,  
Bringing the weary to find rest in Him.*

*O Jesus, Lord and Savior,  
I give myself to Thee,  
For Thou, in Thy atonement,  
Didst give Thyself for me;  
I own no other Master,  
My heart shall be Thy throne;  
My life I give, henceforth to live,  
O Christ, for Thee alone.  
(Thomas O. Chisholm, 1917)*

*For reflection*

1. Is there any area of your life where you are not consciously and consistently living for Jesus?
2. How can you know when, in any area of your life, you are living for yourself rather than for Jesus?
3. What can you do today to encourage your fellow believers to live for Jesus?

*We should not make ourselves, but Christ, the end of our living and actions. A Christian’s life should be devoted to Christ. Alas, how many show the worthlessness of their professed faith and love, by living to themselves and to the world! Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on 2 Corinthians 5.12-15*

*Pray Psalm 27.1-10.*

Pray for more grace, so that you live in the light of Jesus and keep your eyes on Him throughout the day.

*Sing Psalm 27.1-10.*

(St. Denio: *Immortal, Invisible God Only Wise*)

LORD, You are our Light and our Savior most dear!  
You guard us with might; therefore, whom shall we fear?  
Though evil surround us, our enemies fall;  
no harm shall confound us when on You we call.

One thing we request but to dwell with You, LORD.  
Your beauty to test and to think on Your Word.  
In trouble You hide us secure in Your grace;  
no foe may o'erride us: We sing of Your praise.

Hear, LORD, when we cry and be gracious, we pray!  
LORD, do not deny us Your favor this day!  
Our help, our salvation, though others may fall,  
preserve our good station when on You we call.

## 5 Here's Lookin' at You

*Pray Psalm 8.3, 4.*

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,  
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,  
What is man that You are mindful of him,  
And the son of man that You visit him?

*Sing Psalm 8.3, 4.*

(Aurelia: *The Church's One Foundation*)

When I regard the heavens, the work of Your own hand,  
the moon and stars which all in their courses You command,  
then what am I, O Savior, that You take thought of me,  
or I should know Your favor and thus delivered be?

*Read 2 Corinthians 5.1-19; meditate on verses 16-19.*

*Preparation*

1. How did Paul *not* regard others?
2. What ministry has God given to us?

*Meditation*

“Who are you? Who, who, who, who?” So asked a popular song from a few years back. Each of us needs to answer that question every day. We as Christians must follow Paul’s lead so that we will regard ourselves as we should.

What does this entail?

First, forget about looks, wealth, social standing, and all other outward manifestations. Paul did not look at people as they were in flesh (v. 16). Neither should we, beginning with ourselves. After all, Paul explained, we don’t see Jesus in the flesh but we look to Him and look on Him anyway, as He is reported to us in the Scriptures—exalted in glory, worshiped by departed saints, attended by myriads of angels, radiant in beauty, upholding the cosmos by His powerful Word, putting all His enemies under His feet, more beautiful than all the most beautiful people in the world, and preparing an eternal dwelling of glory for us who know Him.

We look at Jesus as He is now, in His fully glorified body. We must look on ourselves and one another this way as well. We stand in good stead before the God of all creation. We are new creations in Christ Jesus, forgiven and clothed with Jesus. We are ministers in the Kingdom of God. This is how God sees us, and it explains why He has appointed us to carry out His reconciling and restoring work to all the world (v. 19; cf. Ps. 8).

So you—you new creation, you vessel of grace, you ambassador of glory, you reconciler of the world, you chosen and forgiven and eternally saved child of God: Here’s lookin’ at you.

See yourself as God does and you will be more likely to live as pleases Him.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.*

It might be true, at least for most of us, that at one time in our lives we knew about Jesus.

We might have known that He is the Son of God, or that He came to earth and lived and died, and we might



even have casually believed that He rose from the dead. At the very least, we had heard His Name mentioned, and we might have even been able to answer a Jeopardy question or two about Him. But we only knew *of* Him.

Then. Suddenly, the veil that kept us as casual observers was torn from our eyes, and we saw Him. And now we know Him, personally and intimately. We daily long to know more of Him, and we studiously apply ourselves to deepen our understanding and knowledge of what pleases Him (2 Tim. 2.15). And we embrace fully the job we have been given to do—as reconciled believers—to reconcile the world to Him. To tell the world that: God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (Jn. 3.16) and now, not imputing anyone’s sins to themselves (2 Cor. 5.19).

And through this new understanding and personal relationship we have become “a new creation” (2 Cor. 5.17).

We absolutely do not have to stumble over the old things that once tripped us up.  
We do not have to be the sinful people that we were.  
We can live victoriously.  
We can be overcomers.  
We are clean, brand-new creations; fashioned by God, for His Kingdom work.

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.  
Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,  
and in whose spirit there is no deceit” (Ps. 32.1, 2).

“You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have covered all their sin” (Ps. 85.2).

“Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man” (1 Sam. 10.6).

“I will run the course of Your commandments, for You shall enlarge my heart” (Ps. 119.32).

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2.20).

“Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5.17)!

Here's lookin' at you.

*For reflection*

1. What new thing has God been doing in your life lately?
2. Knowing how God looks at us, how should we look upon our fellow believers?
3. Whom will you encourage today in their walk with and work for the Lord?

*The renewed man acts upon new principles, by new rules, with new ends, and in new company. The believer is created anew; his heart is not merely set right, but a new heart is given him. He is the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on 2 Corinthians 5.16-21*

*Pray Psalm 8.1, 2, 5-9.*

Give thanks and praise to God for making you, saving you, keeping you, and calling you to be a Kingdom steward in His world. Pray for wisdom and counsel for doing all things as His new creation in Jesus Christ.

*Sing Psalm 8.1, 2, 5-9.*

(Aurelia: *The Church's One Foundation*)

O LORD our Lord how great is Your Name in all the earth!  
The heav'ns display Your glory, and tell Your wondrous worth!  
From babes and nursing infants, LORD, let Your strength increase,  
'til all Your foes surrender, and all their boasting cease.

Yet we in Your own image with glory have been crowned,  
to worship and to serve You throughout creation 'round.  
These works that sing Your glory in our poor hands are placed,  
that we may rule before You to magnify Your grace.

Let every beast and creature, in sky or sea or field,  
in our hands bring You glory as we Your favor wield.  
Let all things sing Your praises, let all declare Your worth!  
O LORD our Lord how great is Your Name in all the earth!

## 6 Ambassadors for Christ

*Pray Psalm 97.1, 9.*

The LORD reigns;  
Let the earth rejoice;  
Let the multitude of isles be glad!  
For You, LORD, *are* most high above all the earth;  
You are exalted far above all gods.

*Sing Psalm 97.1, 9.*

(Darwall: *Rejoice, the Lord is King*)

Rejoice, the LORD is King! O earth, lift up your voice.  
Be glad, you islands, shout and sing: Rejoice! Rejoice!

*Refrain v. 9*

Beyond, above  
all gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

*Read 2 Corinthians 5.1-21; meditate on verses 20, 21.*

*Prepare*

1. How did Paul refer to us?

2. What is our mission?

*Meditation*

Paul was probably referring to himself, Timothy, and Titus when he said they were ambassadors for Christ (v. 20). But since he has previously instructed us to imitate him (1 Cor. 11.1), we are safe in applying this appointment to ourselves as well. *We* are ambassadors for Christ. We represent Him and His Kingdom. We are agents through whom God pleads with the wrong-believing world, “Be reconciled to Me!”

Christ took our sin on Himself so that we “might become the righteousness of God in Him” (v. 21). We have no righteousness of our own, only that which God credits us and works out from within us because of Jesus. We continue to sin (1 Jn. 1.8), but the forgiveness of Jesus always applies as we confess and repent (1 Jn. 1.9).

God has appointed us to the work of restoring the world Jesus has reconciled to the Father. This work begins in our own world, in all the “as you are goings” of our daily lives (Matt. 28.18-20). We plead with the lost to hear and believe the Good News. We encourage our fellow believers to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We order our lives, conduct our activities, and manage all our relationships, roles, and responsibilities with a view to seeing the Kingdom of Jesus come on earth as it is in heaven, in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

We are ambassadors, proud of our country, boasting of our King, and determined to bring the blessings of His Kingdom to the full extent of our active will (Dallas Willard). God is at work within us to help us fulfill this glorious appointment, so let us work hard at working out our salvation in fear and trembling (Phil. 2.12, 13).

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.*

“...as though God were pleading through us...” (2 Cor. 5.20).

Most all of us enjoy watching or participating in some sport. And all sports have someone who is calling the shots, be it football, soccer, baseball, basketball, track and field, even horse racing—a higher pay grade, as it

were, masterminding the whole game. Or think of an orchestra with all its moving parts, as the conductor is controlling the entire company of musicians.

The success of each of these entities depends upon those in charge, and those who work out their instructions.

God is doing the same thing with us. But instead of our part being merely to win a game or make beautiful music, we are speaking for God and imploring others on Christ's behalf to be reconciled to God. It is a weighty responsibility and will take much preparation, practice, and participation on our part.

Our message of reconciliation, as incredible as it seems, is true. It is the truest thing that we know. And it carries the gravitas of life and death. Here it is:

For our sinful sakes,  
God made Him Who knew no sin,  
to be sin for us,  
and take our punishment,  
that we might become through Jesus,  
the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5.21).

We now carry, as ambassadors, this amazing message to all.  
We run the plays, and play the notes given us by the Ultimate Coach/Conductor.  
We are His mouthpiece, proclaiming The One Whom the world should worship and adore (Acts 17.22-31).

“Seek the LORD while He may be found,  
call upon Him while He is near.  
Let the wicked forsake his way, and  
the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
let him return to the LORD, and  
He will have mercy on him; and  
to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Is. 55.6, 7).

*Well, you can tell the world about this  
You can tell the nation about that  
Tell 'em what the Master has done  
Tell 'em that the Gospel has come  
Tell 'em that the victory's been won  
He brought joy, joy, joy, joy, joy, joy  
Into my heart  
(Bob Gibson/Bob Camp, 1964)  
(Simon & Garfunkel)*

Here's lookin' at us as ambassadors for Christ.

*For reflection*

1. Do you see yourself as an ambassador for Christ? What does that entail?
2. To whom—specific people—are you an ambassador for Christ?
3. How can believers encourage and assist one another in this high and holy appointment?

*God allowed his Son to suffer as if a condemned sinner, so that we might be delivered from the penalty of our sins. This is God's*

*righteousness, that we are not justified by works (for then they would have to be perfect, which is impossible), but by grace, in which case all our sin is removed.* John Chrysostom (344-407), *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians* 11.5

*Pray Psalm 97.4-12.*

Praise God for the worldwide witness of ambassadors for Christ in every nation. Call on Him to make you faithful in this calling.

*Sing Psalm 97.4-12.*

(Darwall: *Rejoice, the Lord is King*)

His just and righteous throne 'mid clouds and darkness stands;  
His fiery wrath consumes His foes in every land.

*Refrain v. 9*

Beyond, above  
all gods and nations be exalted, God of love!

Earth trembles at the sight of Jesus' holy face;  
the mountains melt before His might and praise His grace.

*Refrain*

The heav'ns above declare His glorious righteousness;  
and tribes and peoples everywhere His Name confess.

*Refrain*

While Zion gladly sings, let all be brought to shame  
who to vain idols worship bring and scorn His Name.

*Refrain*

All you who love the LORD, despise sin's wicked ways!  
Praise Him Who guides us by His Word through all our days.

*Refrain*

## 7 Glimpses of Glory

*Pray Psalm 27.4-6.*

One *thing* I have desired of the LORD,  
That will I seek:  
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
All the days of my life,  
To behold the beauty of the LORD,  
And to inquire in His temple.  
For in the time of trouble  
He shall hide me in His pavilion;  
In the secret place of His tabernacle  
He shall hide me;  
He shall set me high upon a rock.  
And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me;  
Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle;  
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

*Sing Psalm 27.4-6.*

(St. Denio: *Immortal, Invisible God Only Wise*)  
One thing we request but to dwell with You, LORD.  
Your beauty to test and to think on Your Word.  
In trouble You hide us secure in Your grace;  
no foe may o’erride us: We sing of Your praise.

*Review 2 Corinthians 5.1-21; meditate on verses v. 1.*

*Preparation*

1. What can we expect for our earthly body?
2. What follows that?

*Meditation*

Paul’s confidence as a follower of Christ depended on his being able to “see” into the unseen realm and even into the future. The importance of this focus and orientation appears in various of his epistles, as in Colossians 3.1-3, Ephesians 1.15-23, 1 Corinthians 15, 2 Corinthians 4.16-18, and 2 Corinthians 5. We must admit, that few believers today assume such a vantage point on life.

But perhaps this explains our lack of fervor for the Gospel? Our entanglement in earthly and fleeting things? Our lack of joy and enthusiasm in worshiping and serving the Lord? If we “saw” as clearly as Paul did what lies ahead for us, we might find our confidence, boldness, peace, and joy more constant and abounding.

In 2 Corinthians 5 it is clear Paul has our eternal destiny in mind. He promises that, having endured a form of purgation (v. 10), we shall receive a new body, prepared for us in heaven and made not by hands but by the Word of God (vv. 1-3). This leads to the end of human mortality, for then we shall live forever (v. 4). God is even now preparing this for us, and He has given us His Spirit as a “guarantee” of much more to come (v. 5). For now, that we may be pleasing to God and fulfill our callings as His ambassadors (v. 20), we look to Jesus (v. 16) and join with Him in His work of making all things new (v. 18). We strive to increase in righteousness, knowing that eternal righteousness—the righteousness of Jesus—will be ours forever with Him (v. 21).

Glimpses of glory, clearly seen and regularly considered, can embolden our faith and heighten our anticipation at the joy which is yet to come.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

“Glimpses of glory, clearly seen and regularly considered” are only made possible by the things we know.

What do we know? We know:

That if our earthly house, this tent, our mortal body,  
is destroyed, which it will be, in death,  
we have a building from God, an immortal house,  
not made with hands—no bricks, mortar, or humanity needed—  
but an eternal tent, living, thriving, and rejoicing in the heavens with God (2 Cor. 5.1).  
A tent that will flourish (Prov. 14.11).

What else do we know? We know, as Job did, that:

“My Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth;  
and after my skin is destroyed, this I know,  
that in my flesh I shall see God,  
Whom I shall see for myself,  
and my eyes shall behold, and not another” (Job 19.25-27).

And we know, as Jesus told us, about what He is preparing for us:

A place. A special place for each one of us. And Jesus will return to take us there.

If it were not so, He would have told us. But why is He doing this for us?

Because, as He said, “That where I AM, there you may be also” (Jn. 14.1-4).

Is there anything else that we know? We, like Paul, know:

In Whom we believe, and we too, are persuaded that God is very able to bring all this to fruition (2 Tim. 1.12). This knowledge does, most certainly, “embolden our faith and heighten our anticipation at the joy which is yet to come.”

“And we know” conclusively “that the Son of God has come  
and has given us an understanding,  
that we may know Him who is true;  
and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ.  
This is the true God and eternal life” (1 Jn. 5.20).

Daily glimpse this glory and your outlook will be forever changed.

*For reflection*

1. How will you glimpse the glory of the Lord today?
2. What opportunities to live for God’s glory do you expect to have today?
3. Whom will you encourage to glimpse the glory of the Lord today?

*The believer not only is well assured by faith that there is another and a happy life after this is ended, but he has good hope, through grace, of heaven as a dwelling-place, a resting-place, a hiding-place. In our Father’s house there are many mansions, whose Builder and Maker is God. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on 2 Corinthians 5.1-8*

*Pray Psalm 27.7-14.*

Seek the radiant face of our Lord Jesus Christ and call on Him to help you live in and for His glory today.

*Sing Psalm 27.7-14.*

(St. Denio: *Immortal, Invisible God Only Wise*)

Hear, LORD, when we cry and be gracious, we pray!

LORD, do not deny us Your favor this day!

Our help, our salvation, though others may fall,  
preserve our good station when on You we call.

LORD, teach us; LORD, lead us because of our foes!

Hear, LORD, when we plead for release from their woes.

Had we not believed all Your goodness to see,  
our heart sorely grieved and in turmoil would be.

Wait, wait on the LORD; persevere in His grace.

Hold fast to His Word; seek His radiant face.

Be strong, set your heart to abide in His Word;

His grace He imparts; therefore, wait on the LORD.



*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. What is the difference between “immortality” and “life”?
2. What awaits us as we pass from immortality to life? How should we prepare for this?
3. What does it mean for you to have been appointed an ambassador for Christ?
4. Jesus has reconciled the fallen world to God. Our calling is to restore that world to the Father. What does this work entail?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from this part of our study of 1 and 2 Corinthians?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

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