

“AT HOME IN THE BODY . . . ABSENT FROM THE LORD”
2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10

Introduction:

1. As a wise man once observed: “The world is too much with us.”
2. It is so easy to get caught up in this life that we forget eternal life.
3. Paul was a very practical man, but he was also spiritually minded.
 - a. His feet were firmly planted on the ground, but his eyes were turned toward heaven.
 - b. He was in a dilemma concerning life and death:

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you” (Philippians 1:21-24).

4. In this text, Paul contrasts the two realms of man’s existence.

Discussion:

I. MAN HAS TWO NATURES (4:16).

A. The “outward man” is his physical body.

1. It is “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14).
2. The “outward man” is made of dust and will return to the dust (Genesis 2:7; Ecclesiastes 12:7).
3. The outward man lives an average of seventy to eighty years.

“The days of our lives are seventy years: and if, by reason of strength, they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we fly away” (Psalm 90:10).

B. The “inward man” is man’s spirit.

1. We are made up of body {flesh}, spirit {the thinking, conscious part of us}, and soul {the force which animates the body} (1 Thessalonians 5:23).
2. “Spirit” and “soul” are sometimes used interchangeably for the inner man.
3. Our spirits come from God at conception and return to Him at death (Hebrews 12:9; Ecclesiastes 12:7).
 - a. A poet said: “Dust thou art was not spoken of the soul.”
 - b. Man can destroy the body but not the spirit (Matthew 10:28).
4. The body of a Christian wears out like all others, but the Christian grows stronger in spirit day by day.

II. MAN HAS TWO WEIGHTS (4:17).

A. Our “light affliction” refers to the trials of life.

1. Trouble is the common lot of all people (Job 14:1).
2. All faithful Christians will face persecution and tribulation (Acts 14:22; 2 Timothy 3:12).
3. Earthly life is very brief compared to eternity:

“...for what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away” (James 4:14)?

B. The “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” refers to Heaven.

1. Christians have been begotten again to a living hope:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus

Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:3-5).

2. An old hymn says:

**“Heaven will surely be worth it all; Far beyond the sorrows that here befall;
After this life, with all its strife; Heaven will surely be worth it all.”**

III. MAN HAS TWO SIGHTS (4:18).

A. The “things which are seen” are temporary.

1. They belong to this earth and life on it.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

2. The things on earth will not last, but will perish.

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).

B. The “things which are not seen” are eternal.

1. They are “real,” belong to Heaven and will last forever.

2. “A wise man is he who gives up that which he cannot keep in order to gain that which he cannot lose.”

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?’” (Matthew 16:24-26).

IV. MAN HAS TWO HOUSES (5:1-4).

A. The “earthly house” is our physical body.

- 1. It is a tent, which is not a permanent structure.**
- 2. In it, “we groan,” (suffer weariness, pain and stress).**

B. The “building from God” is our new resurrection body.

“We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality...; then shall be brought to pass that which is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory’” (1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

Conclusion:

- 1. Paul said: “While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:6).**
- 2. Therefore, we must make it our aim always to be “well pleasing to Him” (2 Corinthians 5:9).**
- 3. This is imperative because we will all stand before the Lord to be judged according to that which “we have done in the body” (2 Corinthians 5:10).**
- 4. Are you ready to meet the Lord in Judgment?**

