

## 2 Corinthians 5:1–8

1For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,

3if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.

4For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

5Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

6So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.

7For we walk by faith, not by sight.

8We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

## The Unseen Reality

## 2 Corinthians 5:1-8

What lights your fire spiritually? What makes you stop and think, then ask the Lord for strength before you get up and go on? The answer is thinking of being with Jesus forever and ever.

The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians he did not quit even though his body was wasting away. His relationship with Christ kept on getting better and better.

He kept on mostly because the unseen realities kept him going. What reality was that? Paul's answer was 2 Corinthians 5:1-8.

## I. Our Hope (v.1-5)

## II. How We Must Live (v. 6-8)

## I. Our Hope (v.1-5)

*"For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life." (2 Corinthians 5;1-4)*

A. The Apostle Paul reminded us of God's plan for the present day, and how we must live our lives focused on the future, the life to come. The first feature of the unseen reality is the fact there is a life after this one.

1. There is a word picture in verse 1: ***"if our earthly house, this tent, is taken down."*** He talked about this life we live in the body. Tents are temporary housing. Paul taught us the life we have now and the body we are living in now were never designed to be permanent. Paul did not think in terms of resurrection here, he is talking about death.

2. We look for ***"a dwelling place"*** which is permanent. ***"We have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."*** Our future home is not one we can construct, it is one God has made for us. Two observations we need to make here.

(1) First, this dwelling was made by God.

(2) Second, it is eternal. It will not end.

B. The second reality is that we should earnestly desire this future home. We need to ask, is this a home or is it a body?

1. If Paul wrote describing "a glorified" body, we know we will receive that body only at the resurrection, when the Lord Jesus returns for our body. We read of this body in several places all from the pen of the Apostle Paul. For example, we read in ***Philippians 3:20-21, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself."***

2. If it is all about a body we will receive when Jesus comes again, we lose the point of Paul's lesson. In this text, he never mentioned a body when he talked about our heavenly home. Perhaps we should connect this to the Lord Jesus Christ and His promise in ***John 14:2-3. "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."***

C. The yearning is described in ***verses 2-4. "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life"*** Notice again here, although the image changes, the basic reality is the same. Although Paul used verbs which describe the putting on and the putting off of clothes, the point again is not, "if I die now, I will someday get a body and be a disembodied spirit until then." Rather it is I earnestly desire to be in heaven and have a place there, but I am not anxious to die. I do not want to die, I want my ***"mortality [to] be swallowed up by life."***

D. How did Paul know this is the reality all those who know the Lord Jesus can rely on in this present life? *Verse five* tells us. ***“Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.”***

E. This is significant!

1. We know this is true because the Lord promised us an eternal home with him.
2. Second, He gave us the Spirit of God as an earnest, a guarantee.

## II. How We Must Live (v. 6-8)

***“So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5.6-8)***

A. Why did Paul not quit when he looked at the unseen reality? He didn't quit because when this tent was taken down, he had a permanent place in heaven. What will it be like when we get to heaven? Do we just float about like disembodied spirits or is it like John Newton wrote: “Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail, / And mortal life shall cease, / I shall possess, within the veil, / A life of joy and peace”?

B. There is a blessed truth in ***Matthew 22:31–32***. The Lord Jesus Himself said, ***“But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”*** Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not dead or disembodied spirits in eternity but were alive.

C. This is Paul's point. As soon as we leave the body (the first time the word *soma* appears in this text), we are in the presence of the Lord. Our home is there and waiting for us. We do not have to wait until the end of the age to receive it. Remember when Paul wrote to the Philippians about his conflict? ***“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.” (Philippians 1:21–23)***

D. How are we to act now? We are to walk by faith (looking at the unseen realities) and not just by sight.

Do we recognize how vital this is? Do you remember how Peter began his epistle to suffering believers? ***“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. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,” (1 Peter 1:3–6)*** Is this reality real enough to each of us that in the most difficult moments of our lives, it will give us joy and strength to persevere?

**My Heart Is Filled With Thankfulness**