

Bible Study
Avon Park Holiness Campmeeting
Sunday Feb. 12, 2012

II Cor. 5:1-10

Clothed for Heaven

1

Reflections

- “Sleeper” book of the New Testament
- In the shadow of I Cor
- Outline not as clear as most
- Most personal of all of Paul’s books
- Passion rings throughout
- Double themes
 - Paul’s “*agon*” love, prayer, exhort
 - Corinthian situation: internal issues

2

Criticisms

Implicit and explicit criticisms
Duplicitous, fickle, or fake
Brash when far off
Two-faced when present
Basically cowardly and abusive

How does one “think” in the
middle of that? Respond? Live?

3

Death of a friend

- Cancer
- Years of battle
- Hospice
- End of all help
- Medicate the pain – prepare for death
- Moment he died her response was “**I knew it was just his earthly suit** but I had come to love that face for 32 years and I missed him within a couple of minutes.”

4

Sections and Paragraphs

Ch 1-7 True Ministry/Life

- 1:3-11 Consistent Comfort
- 1:12-2:13 Clean Conscience
- 2:14-4:6 New Covenant – Glorious Gospel
- 4:7-4:15 Real Glory seems “less”
- 4: 16-18 Glory through Suffering
Glory in the Seen and Unseen

5:1-10 House not made with hands

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Sections in the paragraph

- 5:1-5 Mortal swallowed by our Life
- 5:6-10 Walking that pleases our Judge

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Preoccupations with the material: buildings, mansions

- Pearl and gold – literal?
- What merit have those things for us?
- Much research done on that promise in Jn 14 – prepare a room – typical in 1st cent Jewish communities
- Response of critiques –
“psychological crutch” “pie in the sky”
- Sire: Ult. Being, Us, Ethics, Time, Death

7

A Quick survey of the paragraph

- Terms for ‘habitations’ (1,1,1,1,2,4)
- Contrast between earthly and heavenly (1,2,3)
- Terms contrasting ‘states’
 - Destroyed vs. eternal (1)
 - clothed and unclothed, naked (2,3,4)
- Rec. of ‘groaning’ (2,4) (cf. Rom 8)
- Themes in v. 5 are unique to the section

8

How it fits together

- Connected to previous theme –
 - Don’t lose heart
 - Earthen vessels which manifest the life of Jesus 4:7-12
 - Outer perishing – inner being renewed 4:13-18
 - **Continued substantiation** of argument by contrast – rec. of ‘for’ (= because, since)
 - Shift to ‘unseen’ *future questions*
Key is learning to relate ‘that’ world with ‘this’ one
- We must not diminish either the present or the future

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The ‘end’ of Comfort

- Basis: The Father of the Lord Jesus’ **mercy** 1:3
The God of All Comfort
- “in all our **crushings**” (*thlipseis*) **1:4, 1:8**
- How does the mercy of God get to others?
- What is the fullest meaning of **glory**?

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The suffering of Christ in me

“...the tendency has been to evade being identified with the sufferings of Jesus Christ; men have sought to procure the carrying out of God’s order by a short cut of their own. God’s way is always the way of suffering, the way of the “long, long trail.”

O. Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest, Nov. 5

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The Mystery of His Suffering

To abandon all, to strip one’s self of all, in order to seek and follow Jesus Christ naked to Bethlehem, where He was born, naked to the hall where He was scourged, and naked to Calvary where He died on the cross, is so great a mystery that neither the thing, nor the knowledge of it, is given to any but through faith in the Son of God.
John Wesley

–

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The Realism of the Incarnation

- Embodies Universal Ideals
- Provision for our Malady
- Explanation of Reality
- Meaning of Suffering
- Triumph over Death
- Transcendence over History

(R. Zacharias)

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How do I keep my mind focused on the Unseen?

1. Share an eternal perspective

- *For* – begins the explanation (5:1)
 - Note ‘for’ at 2, 4,
- *We Know* – not a mere “connective”
- **Indicates a group of people who have reoriented their perspective to the absolute disdain of a ‘rational’ worldview**
- Often in an emphatic position - form

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On Not estimating along the line of nature alone

Paul is only ever advocating a transformative gospel
Me and student, “What is the biggest need of the Church today?”

The Spirit lifts us into the realm where Jesus lives

–
Col 3 Keep your entire disposition on things above
II Cor 4-5 The only way to live in afflictions –
Don’t estimate Jesus by experience
Mark 8 Get behind me, Satan
John 3 You must be born (into another whole reality) again
John 20 Receive the Holy Spirit

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1. Sharing an eternal perspective

- We – in midst of a broken world
- We are the people
- We being people
 - who do not look at the seen as the full expression of reality
- We know, we believe,
 - The power of corporate worship
 - I believe...with you, subjective and communal

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Pronouns help connect the paragraphs

- 2:14 All of us are lead in triumph
- 2:17 We – Apostles are sincere
- 3:1-18 We - mainly apostles until v. 18
- 4:1 Therefore undaunted we are not deceitful
 - 4:7 But we have this treasure in vessels
- 4:16 Therefore we are undaunted by the seen
 - 5:1-11 For (substantiates previous) we (general)
 - Not emphatic but words denote expectancy

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Building from the Contrast in 4:16-18

– Outer in relation to Inner

- Decay vs. Renewal (16)
- Momentary vs. Eternal (17)
- Light vs. Weighty (17)
- Affliction vs. Glory (17)
- Seen vs. Unseen (18)
- Temporal vs. Eternal (18) rec. 17,18,5:1

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Immortality

- Paul's unique terms:
- *Athanasius* – not subject to death I Cor 15:53
- *Aphtharsia* – not subject to decay Rom 2:7
- Not a major theme in the OT
 - Tree of life – choice ended the potential of immortality?
 - Eternity stamped on their hearts Ecc 3:11
- God alone is immortal I Tim 1:17

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Immortality cont.

- Sin and its effects have produced:
 - Mortal, perishable, susceptible to corruption
 - Yet we crave it:
- The only way to eternal life is through Jesus Christ
 - Not works, or achievement
 - Only Jesus has abolished death and provided eternal life

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Paul's 3 "main" passages

- **I Cor 15** – is the major place to study the concept of immortality
 - Paul uses all three of his unique terms for endless life offered by grace
 - That which will disintegrate vs. the imperishable
 - He contrasts earthly bodies and heavenly ones
 - 15:42-44
 - Weakness vs. Power
 - Dishonor vs. Glory
 - Death vs. Life – a radical transformation of the physical into the glorious
- More by implication:
 - **Phil 1:20-21; 3:20-21**
 - **II Cor 5:1-11**

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Remember the Recurrence of Contrast in 4:16 to 5:4

- **Inner in relation to Outer**
- Decay vs. Renewal (16)
- Momentary vs. Eternal (17)
- Light vs. Weighty (17)
- Affliction vs. Glory (17)
- Seen vs. Unseen (18)
- Temporal vs. Eternal (18) rec. 17,18,5:1
- Destroyed vs. Building from God (1)
- Naked vs. Clothed with eternal habit.
- Burdened vs. Swallowed up by Life (4)

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Contrast (cont.)

- 5:1 earthly tent vs. building from God
torn down vs. not made with hands
eternal in the heavens
- 5:4 in this we groan, (or long continually)
due to afflictions (like 4:7ff)
desiring to be clothed w. habitation
the one from heaven
- naked vs. clothed
further clothed
- The "folding of the tent" as a metaphor

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Secure in an immortal Personal God

- This building is...
 - From God (lit. *out of God*)
 - 4:14 He who raised Jesus will also raise us
 - God has prepared this habitation for us 5:5
 - And gives us the Spirit as a *seal*
 - Our longing and hope is for God and from Him
 - Seal, authenticates, attests, confirms
 - The Spirit of life who animates us is the guarantee, the down payment,

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Issue which has challenged me recently

- Living in the unseen MORE than the seen
 - Radio: same words I had used, unseen
 - Word, prayer – rejoice in hope that is unseen!
 - Individual disciplines
 - Corporate disciplines
 - Here Paul is emphasizing the theology of glory
 - Seeing the world in light of Another world
 - Book on end times – brilliant analysis
 - 98% negative – 1/2 page on response – flee!

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With whom do you share an eternal perspective?

- Surround yourself with the hopeful, joyful, expectant, dreaming, focused on Jesus

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2. Sharing in His Life

- Mortality swallowed up by life
- Life from “our” view: The Life Is/Offers
 - Earthly 1 Building from God
 - Destroyed 1 He has prepared
 - Groan 2 Eternal ‘house’
 - Naked, groaning 3 Clothed
 - Burdened 4 Swallowed up by life

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Securing a Spiritual Freedom Breaking free from the ‘sensible’ life

- We are shut up to this physical world; to five senses to this earth.
 - some minds are made Christian here because they see God’s purpose in it.
 - “We that are in this bodily frame do groan,” says Paul,
- When people get fanatical it is the barriers they go against, birth and death, sex.
- if we try to get out of the body by spiritualistic means or by suicide we shall have no guide; but if we get out of it in the providence of God and by faith in Jesus, there is no darkness or desperation—“O death, where is thy sting?”
“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

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Paul’s intriguing metaphors

- Yes
- Triumph March
- Aroma
- Epistles/Tablets
- Veil
- Earthen Vessels
- Tent – continued theme in 5 body/spirit

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Folding up the tent

- Remember Paul spent a yr. and and half making tents in Aquila’s shop
- A simple picture: just like striking a tent
- Loosed completely
- Gives way to a permanent substantial, glorious, blessed, eternal life - *a glory garment*
- A building made by incarnate hands as it were
- But Paul does not indicate that this is only in the future – the tense and structure are present
- We have and possess now that stability

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1. Share in an ETERNAL perspective from God
 2. Share in His LIFE
 3. SECURE in an immortal Personal God
- v. 5 God has made us for the very thing...

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The Trinity as my future

- This building is –
 - From God (lit. “out of God”) what building?
 - 4:14 He who raised Jesus will also raise us
 - 5:5 God has prepared this habitation for us
And gives us the Spirit as a seal
- Doesn't that sound like Jn 14?
 - Our longing and hope is for God and from Him

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The Spirit as Seal

- Seal (Gk. *arrabon*)
 - Lit. a physical seal,



- authenticates, attests, confirms
- The Spirit of life who animates us is the guarantee, the down payment, He will pay in full



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How does one “think” in the middle of that? Respond? Live?

- 4:1 **Do not lose heart**
Vessels **filled with the Life of God**
- 5:1 Confidence: Unseen determines Seen
“Tent” gives way to glory of His Life
- 5:6 Absence or presence of Christ
The judgment of Christ
- 5:11 The love of Christ

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So we live in the glory of what He is building

- With an eternal perspective
- In an Immortal Personal Triune Life
- With a mortality *swallowed up* by life!
 - Same word as is I Cor 15:54
 - Paul is making commentary on himself!
 - Death is swallowed up in the victory of The Life (*ho zoe*)
 - He gave life, we are already living 4:11
 - He gives the Life which is Himself

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Prayer by O. Chambers

- We thank Thee that there is no Good-bye. We ask Thee that Thy Crown and Seal may be upon us every one until we see Thee face to face.
- Paul in I Tim 4
 - We have the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come...we both labor and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God...meditate on these things, give yourself to them.

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