

2 Corinthians 5

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Tape 8156
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Now man basically is a spirit. The real me is spirit, soul. As we mentioned this morning, “And God formed man out of the dust of the earth.” And at that point man was nothing, well, he really wasn’t man yet, he was just something that was formed out of the dust of the earth—like a statue. Inert matter, no life, but then God breathed into his nostrils and man became a living soul. The real man moved into the house and began to dwell in that house of clay. So we dwell in a house of clay.

As Paul in the last chapter, talked about, the glorious gospel and things of the gospel, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, these bodies of clay. But the real me is spirit. The body is the medium by which my spirit expresses itself. What I am, feel, and think, I’m able to relate through the medium of my body.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. So we know that when this earthly tent, this body in which I presently live, is dissolved, that is, when I leave this body. When I move out, then we know that at that point we have a building of God, that’s not made with hands that’s eternal in the heavens. He is talking about this body dissolving, he’s talking about the fact that when your spirit leaves the body, the body begins to immediately disintegrate.

God said to Adam, out of the dust you were taken and to the dust you shall return, to dust thou art and to dust thou shall return. Talking not of the Spirit, but talking of the physical body, which is temporal. We don’t look at the things which are seen because they are temporal, the things which are not seen, they are eternal. So in that contrast, there is that contrast between this present body in which I live and the new body in which I will live forever, the building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. God has a new body for me.

Now as we’ve mentioned, this body has all of the inherent deficiencies of my ancestry. It’s a hand me down. It goes way on back. In the beginning it was with Adam, pretty strong, healthy and virile. The gene pool was quite pure. But throughout many, many, generations there has been a pollution of the gene pool, the breakdown of the cells and all. So here I am a composite of the gene factors that have come.

It’s interesting that in the study of the genes and all, the scientists have concluded that we all go back to a common pair. The study of the DNA and all, they’ve come to the conclusion that all of us actually have a common ancestry way on back. Well, it didn’t take scientists to discover that, the Bible told us that a way, long time ago. There was the common pair from which we’ve all descended.

So here we are in the polluted gene cell pattern with well, people are living longer all the time. It seems like, you know, more and more people are celebrating their hundredth birthday. I have no intention of celebrating a hundredth birthday. I really have no desire to celebrate a hundredth birthday in this body. I’m not really looking forward to the hundredth birthday, you know. Far from it, I trust that by then the Lord in His grace and love, will be gracious to me and take me home, that I might be dwelling in that new building of God not made with hands, that’s eternal in the heavens.

Jesus said (John 14:2), in My Father’s house there are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you and I’m going to prepare a place for you. David said I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. The building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Now there is a tremendous mystery concerning the new body and its relationship to the present body. Paul in first Corinthians fifteen (1 Cor. 15:35), said, some of you will say, but how are the dead raised and with what body will they come? And pointing us to nature, Paul said, when you plant a seed into the ground, you don’t plant the body that shall be, all you plant is a bare grain. God gives to it a body as

pleases Him, and so is the resurrection of the dead. There is a relationship. There is a tie. There is a mystic relationship between this body and the new body that I will have. Just what it is, I don't know, but I do believe in the resurrection of the dead.

Now Jesus rose and seemed to be in the same body, but in reality His was a special case. We need to recognize that.

Sin is the corrupting factor in the body. Because of the inherent sin, I was born in sin, shaped in iniquity. And sin has that destructive aspect to it. You can't get away from it. That is why the moment you move out of your body, the moment your spirit leaves your body, your body begins to dissolve, to be corrupted because of the sin factor.

Now Jesus was sinless. Therefore when His spirit—and He dismissed His spirit. He said nobody takes My life from Me. I give My life. There on the cross, He bowed His head and dismissed His spirit, the Scripture said. He said to His spirit, you can go now. He said I have the power to lay it down. I have the power to take it up again. And so He dismissed His spirit. He had that capacity. But because His body was sinless, His body would have remained had His spirit ascended into heaven, His body would have remained in perfect condition. There would have been no deterioration of the body and no need for the embalming, because there was no sin; thus, no corrupting aspect, so that when He appeared again to His disciples, He was in His body. And He ascended bodily into heaven. And He will come again, bodily, to this earth because His body was not subject to corruption as is ours.

We will have a new body that is related to this body in some mystic way and we're not sure just how but when we get there we will discover. So some things God has left for us to know in the future and we can't know them now.

But we do know that when this body is dissolved or it goes back to dust, we have a building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Temporary compared to the eternal, the things that I see, this body. The things that I don't see, my new body, a building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

²*For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:* Paul, writing to the Philippians (Phil. 1:19-24), said, I find myself with mixed emotions. I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better, nevertheless, for your sakes, I know that I need to stay around awhile. But his desire was to depart and to be with Christ.

Here he talks about, I'm groaning. I want to be clothed upon with that new body, which is from heaven. His desire was to enter on into that eternal time of glory and bliss. It was because he had a taste of it. He was caught up into the third heaven. He said whether I was in the body or out of the body, I don't know. That is whether or not I actually was dead and had an out of body experience or if I was still alive and just sort of in this trance, after the stoning, I'm not sure. But what I am sure of is that I was there in heaven, in the third heaven and I really heard things that were so glorious, it would be unlawful to try and describe them with human language. So from that time on, Paul groaned earnestly desiring to be clothed upon, to move into, this new body, our house, which is from heaven.

³*If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.* That is, Paul is saying, I'm not really desiring to be in an unembodied state.

Now there are a lot of people that teach when a Christian dies, he goes into some kind of a soul sleep or a limbo, an unembodied state of limbo, until the great day of resurrection. Paul, when he said, my desire to is to depart and to be with Christ which is far better, was referring not to, I desire to depart and be in this limbo-sleep. No, that's not what he is saying, to depart and to be with Christ. In talking of his own experience, he said, I don't know if I was in the body or out of the body. But, I know I was in heaven and there were things that were so glorious. Now, Paul's body was lying there. His friends were standing around looking at that lifeless form, crying, oh, God, what a great guy. Oh, you know. They were going on. His body was just lying there, but Paul was up, wow! Glory, you know! This is great, oh, you can't believe it you know! He was having an ecstatic time, up there in heaven, while his

friends were weeping over his body that was lying there on the ground, having been pelted by those stones. So he desired to go on back, groaning that I might have this new body, that I might be clothed upon with a new body there in the heavens. Because if I'm so clothed, I will not be found naked, that is I will not be as an unembodied spirit, an ethereal kind of an essence, somewhere out floating in the universe.

⁴*For we that are in this tabernacle*, Talking again about our body, again referring to it as a tent. Peter when he wrote his letter (2 Peter 1:12-14), said I'm writing to you things that you already know. I've mentioned these things to you before, but now I'm writing them to you so that after I depart, you may still have them because they are now written. And he spoke about leaving this tabernacle. I know that I will soon be leaving this tabernacle, so I am writing them to you so that after I've left this tabernacle, you might still have them written because they are truths that need to be rehearsed over and over again. There are certain things that we need to hear over and over. We need to be reminded. We need to be constantly reminded. So to put you into remembrance, Peter said, of the things though you already know them. But I'm writing them that even after I leave this tabernacle you may still have them. So the reference to this body as a tabernacle, a temporary place where I am now living. But one day my spirit and soul will move out of it. It will be left here to dissolve while I move into the building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

So we that are in this tabernacle *do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed*, (Again, not that I would be naked, not that I would be unclothed.) *but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life*. Paul said in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15:51), that we're not going to all die, but we're all going to be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye. For he said, this corruption, referring to our bodies, must put on incorruption. And this mortal, referring to our bodies must put on immortality.

So now he is saying much the same, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Then he said, it will be brought to pass the saying, oh, death where is your sting? Oh grave where is your victory? For death has been swallowed up in victory. That is through Jesus Christ our Lord! There is now no sting to death, no victory to death, as far as death conquering or death being the victor. Death is the glorious coronation to the child of God! It is the entering into the glory of God's eternal kingdom.

Now, the time factor and this is an issue that is often brought up. There is one aspect to the issue that is rarely brought up, but I think is a very pertinent aspect of the issue. And that is the things which are seen which are temporal and the things, which are not seen, are eternal. The things, which we see are temporal and they are all restricted to time.

We live in three dimensions. Someone suggested, time is the fourth dimension. But we are bound by time. We talk about years. We talk about months. We talk about days, hours, minutes, seconds and now in the computer age, nanoseconds. But we measure things in the time dimension. And we are so bound by the time dimension, that we cannot think apart from time. I mean it's just locked into our whole thinking process—birth, death, tomorrow, today, yesterday, last week, next month. I mean, you can't escape it. It's just a part of our very process of thinking. We think in that realm.

Now once we leave the material realm, we also leave the time dimension. And we enter then into the eternal dimension, which is timeless. So that with God, the eternal God, everything is in the now. It isn't in the, (He doesn't think in terms of past or future,) but it's now that you may know that I am God, that there is none like unto Me. I will tell you things before they have come to pass down there in the earth. As you are orbiting the sun and you're going through your years, God has already gone through all the orbits. He's outside of it. And He can see all of the orbits, when the sun finally fizzles out and there is no orbiting of the earth again. Maybe it goes into a super nova or whatever before it burns out. But God sees the whole thing. He watches it. He knows the end from the beginning. (Ecclesiastes 3:15) That which has been is now. That which shall be is already past. And God requires that which is past. I mean we can't see, we'd blow a fuse. What are you talking about, Solomon? You know, that

which has been is now? And that which shall be has already been? He's talking about the eternal dimension. When the angels, the cherubim around the throne, say holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which is, which was, which is to come. They are describing His eternal nature. He's all that right now!

So, when I leave this material realm, the mortal body, I enter into the eternal dimension, timeless dimension, so that to talk about the future resurrection would be wrong, because it's already taken place as far as eternity is concerned, in the eternal. So that's an issue that I think, when the theologians discuss this issue of resurrection and time factor, they need to take into consideration, this eternal aspect of the whole picture, which puts it into an entirely different light.

I think in terms of right now, if I should die, then the Lord maybe will come for the church in five years, you know. Well, I'm already there, according to Paul. So that mortality may be swallowed up in life.

⁵*Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God,* This is God's purpose. This is God's plan. God created you. He that hath wrought in us for the selfsame purpose is God. It is God's purpose, God's desire that you come into a meaningful relationship with Him, that you might spend eternity with Him. God wants you. God longs that you will spend eternity in the glories of His kingdom.

Father, Jesus prayed (John 17:24), I wish that those that were with Me now, might see Me in the glory that I had with You before the world ever was. That's the Lord's desire for you! He has wrought you for this very selfsame purpose, that when you leave this body, you might be present with Him in the glory of His kingdom! He's wrought you for this selfsame purpose. Oh, the glorious plan of God! He's not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. He desires that all men might surrender to Him in order that they might know the glory of His love and of His grace. And of the glorious things that He has planned in the future for those who love Him. He has wrought you for this selfsame purpose.

who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Now, the Spirit of God within us is sort of the down payment in which God has declared His earnest intention of fulfilling His purposes in your life.

If you go to the store, you see a lovely bedroom set. It's the last one and it's a floor model. When it's sold, it's half price and they are going to sell it. It's just what you've been looking for and wanting and here it is, half price. And you don't have your checkbook with you. And you say to the sales person, oh, I want that! I've been looking for that. I want that! But I don't have my checkbook with me. All I've got is two hundred dollars in my pocket right now, but I want that. They'll say well, give us the two hundred dollars as a down payment and it's yours. Well, I don't want to do that. I want to go home and get my checkbook. Fine, but if someone comes in the meantime and buys it, sorry because we aren't sure you are going to come back. You look sort of shifty to us and, you know, we don't want to hold it and have a buyer come along and then thus lose the sale. So give us some earnest money, money that proves that you are earnest in your intention of purchasing. So you give them earnest money that they might hold it for you. You plan to come with the checkbook right back and pay it off, because that's what you've been looking for so long. An opportunity of a lifetime to buy it at half price, oh my, we're excited. But you give earnest money to guarantee the fact that you're going to come back and finish the transaction.

So God has given to us the earnest of the Holy Spirit. He has promised to redeem us, fully, completely! How do I know that He's going to do it. Great promises, well, He gives to me the earnest of the Holy Spirit. He says, look, I intend to. Here is the down payment. And He gives to us the Holy Spirit. Because of the Spirit, John says that He has given to us. We know that we have passed through that because of the Spirit that God has given to us.

So in writing to the Ephesians (Eph. 1:13-14), Paul said, that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. God is going to complete the transaction. And to show that He is intending to complete that transaction of

your redemption, He gives to you the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is the earnest of the inheritance, until He comes and takes us unto Himself and we have that full redemption, then, in Christ.

So, ⁶*Therefore we are always confident*, (Because of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.) *knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body*, (While I'm living in this tent,) *we are absent from the Lord*: ⁷*(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)* I don't see the Lord. I feel His presence. He speaks to me. But that's by faith. I walk by faith, but not by sight. But we have this confidence as we walk by faith. But I know that as long as I'm living in this body, I'm absent from the Lord.

Peter, writing about the same things said (1 Peter 1:8), whom, having not seen, you love. And though you do not yet see Him now, yet you rejoice with the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory! I don't see Him yet, but yet by faith, I rejoice. I have a joy that is indescribable! It is full of glory in the anticipation of the completed work of God in my life when I stand before the throne, complete in Jesus Christ, redeemed by His blood, with the whole family of God, to spend eternity in the glories of His kingdom. In the anticipation, there is that joy. There is that hope and the rejoicing with joy unspeakable, full of glory.

So, ⁸*We are confident*, (verse eight) *I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord*. I would rather be absent from this body. Now I know as long as I'm in this body, I'm absent from the Lord. But oh, I would rather be absent from this body, that I might be present with the Lord.

In First Corinthians, chapter thirteen, Paul, speaking of Jesus Christ, says, now we see through the glass darkly, but then face to face. And how we long for that time when we see our Lord face to face. Now through faith, through the glass darkly, but then one day, face to face. So willing rather, I'd rather be with the Lord, and I'm confident that I'm going to be. And I'm willing rather to be absent from this body and to be present with the Lord.

⁹*Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him*. I labor for the Lord whether I'm present with Him or absent. Now Paul talks about our being accepted in Christ, being accepted in the Beloved, there in Ephesians, chapter one (Eph. 1:6), one of the glorious Spiritual blessings in Christ that we have in heavenly places. The fact that God has accepted me. But He has accepted me in Christ and thus I labor that whether I'm in this body or with Him, I'm going to be accepted by the Lord.

¹⁰*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*. All of us one day are going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Thus when I'm present with Him I want to be accepted by Him, thus I labor so that when I stand before Him, I'll be accepted, because all of us are going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Now, it's important to note that there is a vast difference between the judgment seat of Christ, where the believer will stand and the great White Throne judgment of God, where the unbeliever will stand. The judgment seat of Christ is where the believers will stand in order to receive the rewards for the work that we have done for Christ while in these bodies.

The Greek word is "Bema", the Bema seat or the judgment seat of Christ. It's the same Greek word that's used for the judges' seat in the Olympics. When a person has run their race and had won, they would come before the judgement seat, the judges' seat in the Olympics. The judges would take and put the laurel wreath upon their head as they stood before the judgment seat.

Now Paul, those that were in the wrestling in the Olympics, again, those that won would stand before the judges' seat and receive the laurel wreath. Now Paul said that unless they strove lawfully they wouldn't be rewarded. You know, if you cheated, if you used steroids and were caught, then the reward would be taken from you. So they won't receive their reward, Paul said, unless they strive lawfully.

Now with us the big issue, will not be the works as much as the motive behind the works. You can have a right motive and do your work and nothing come of it, but because your motive was right, you'll

be rewarded, though the person maybe didn't accept Christ. You will still be rewarded because you were a witness for Jesus Christ.

On the other hand you may have done glorious works, but your motive was wrong. And thus you'll be stripped of those rewards.

Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, do great and marvelous miracles and so forth? Did we not cast out devils? I never knew you.

Jesus in Matthew six, on the Sermon on the Mount, said, be careful that you don't do your righteousness before men to be seen of men. Don't let that be the motive. I want men to see me. I want people to know how wonderful I am, how gracious, how benevolent, how kind, how forgiving, so I do everything in a showy way, drawing attention to myself.

Jesus said, don't give like the Pharisees who sound a trumpet before them as they come marching in. There is a band in front of them as they come marching in, you know. And they drop in their offering, you know. Oh, oh, look at that! Can you believe how much he gave? Isn't that glorious? Jesus said, well, you have your reward, the adulation of man, the approbation by man. That is your reward.

When you pray, don't be like the Pharisees who stand on the street corner so that everybody can see how spiritual they are. They are praying! But go into your closet. Shut the door. Pray to the Father, which sees in secret, and your Father, which sees in secret, will reward you openly. So He is talking about how I am doing my righteousness. Am I doing it in such a way as to draw attention, and glory and praise unto me? If so then that is the reward, the adulation, the applause, the awe that people have when they come around me, that's my reward! Because my motive was wrong.

So we're all going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and what will be judged are the motives that are behind the things that I did. What motivated me to do it? Was it the love of Christ, as Paul said here, that constrained me? Or was it the love of attention and applause and awe, power, is that what motivated me?

So that my works, the Bible says, will be judged by fire. Many of them will just go up in a puff of smoke. But Lord, I pledged a thousand dollars! They danced all over TV as they read my name! Great, you had your reward. It's sad, but there is going to be a lot of disappointment at the judgment seat of Christ because people will discover that they were doing things with wrong motivations. We will receive the things that are done in our bodies according to that which we have done, whether it be good or bad.

¹¹*Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord*, Now Jesus speaks (Matthew 25:15-30) about how that when He had given to his servants, one five talents, one four talents, one, one, the results, when the time came for the judging. What did you do with the five? What did you do with the four? What did you do with the one? And knowing therefore the terror of the Lord. The one who had the one talent and buried it. He said Lord, I know that You are an austere man. I know that you reap where didn't sow. You want, you know, full return on Your investment. So I hid it. I've saved it! I've got it! The Lord said, you've judged yourself! You know that I want interest. You know that I want a return on My investment. You should have at least put it out to the bankers and collected interest. Receiving, therefore knowing the terror and Jesus tells of the result of those who did not have the works.

So knowing the terror of the Lord. I mean this is serious business, *we persuade men*; We urge people unto good works, unto works of righteousness.

but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. Paul said as far as I am concerned. God knows! I'm manifested and I trust that you understand my heart and my motive is pure in the eyes of the Lord.

¹²*For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.* Now Paul is again dealing with those that had come into Corinth and were putting Paul down. They were challenging the authenticity of his apostleship. They were challenging the doctrines that he was teaching. They were

seeking to put Paul down. They were the showy kind.

It's sort of sad that, you know, I've watched, (I can't really watch them much.) it's a quirk. It's a crazy curiosity. It's--I can't believe it, you know, I mean! It's so incredulous, you just can't believe it so you watch because you can't believe that that's really happening. I can't believe that! How? It's a mystery. It's a puzzle that people would watch some of these Tele-evangelists, or go to their services and sit there and let them go on these tirades. I can't understand. I watch and say, I can't believe this. It's not happening. It's not true. And I can watch it for just a few minutes, then I've got to flip it off. Or otherwise, I'll flip out if I don't flip it off, you know! But it's a weird thing.

And Paul was saying, you know, if people come in and abuse you and beat you and all, you take it. I come in with love and you turn against me. Why is it that people, I guess that it's people who have a sadistic kind of a nature that they like to go and get beaten or something? But I don't understand that.

So here were these that were coming in. They were ripping the people off. They were taking up the offerings, you know, and just ripping them off, one way after another. And here Paul comes in. He works. He says, no, I don't want any of your money. I just want to serve the Lord, here. I just want share the love of Jesus Christ with you all.

They say well Paul, you know, he doesn't even collect an offering, you know. They were putting him down. So Paul said, these fellows who like appearances, you know, they are always making the big show. I'm sharing this with you that you might glory with what God has done in my life. You know my heart. You know my thoughts. I'm not one who goes for the appearances. But you might have something to answer to those who are following after these guys who like to make the big appearance, the big scene.

¹³*For whether we be beside ourselves,* And this is an accusation that they had made of Paul, that he was crazy. He talks to himself. You know, a person who is crazy will go down the street talking to himself. I did not say that. Yes, you did! No, I didn't. You did too! No, I didn't. Well, they say he is beside himself. There are two of us. So they were saying of Paul, he is beside himself. He is crazy.

So whether we are beside ourselves *it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.* So he just threw that in.

But then he goes on to say what motivates me. ¹⁴*For the love of Christ constraineth us;* that's my motivation, the love of Jesus Christ. It just pushes. It constrains me.

because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: Paul was constrained by the love of Christ because he saw the people outside of Christ had a destiny in hell. And that troubled Paul. He went to Athens. He saw a city that was wholly given over to idolatry. Paul was troubled in his spirit, it said, because he saw these people. Their desire to worship, their desire for God was demonstrated in the fact that they were worshipping the idols. But they were worshipping false gods, gods that could not save. And the love of Christ was just so constraining Paul that he couldn't handle it.

He was supposed to be there for rest and relaxation, but he just couldn't handle it. He started talking with people about Jesus Christ until they invited him on up to Mars Hill to discuss with them this strange doctrine that he was preaching.

But it was the love of Christ that was the motivating, pushing factor that sent Paul to the regions beyond to share Christ where He was never preached or never heard because he didn't want to build on another man's foundation. He was going out to reach the lost for Jesus Christ, constrained, motivated by the love of Christ. Because we thus judge if one died for then all are dead. Every man needs Jesus Christ! Every man needs to be redeemed by Jesus Christ if he ever hopes to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said unless you are born again, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. So Paul was determined to get the word out, the message out, the love of Christ pushed him and the love for people who were lost. That was the motivating thing behind Paul's ministry.

¹⁵*And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves,* Oh my, I

could do a whole series in this. He died for all of us that we shouldn't live for ourselves. And yet how many Christians are still living for themselves. They haven't made a reckless abandonment of their lives to Jesus Christ. It's still me first.

That they, which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, *but unto him which died for them, and rose again.* We need to be living for Jesus Christ! Paul said (Galatians 2:20-21), "I am crucified with Christ, never the less I live, and yet not I, and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." I am crucified with Christ. I don't live for myself. I live for Christ. The life that I now live, I live by the faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.

¹⁶*Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.* We're not interested in man's flesh, man's fleshly achievements or man's fleshly attainment. We're not interested in that. We are interested in man's spirit, the things that are eternal, not the things which are temporary. And though we have once known Christ after the flesh, now He has ascended. We henceforth know Him no more after the flesh. He has now ascended. He is in heaven. He is a part of that unseen world now.

¹⁷*Therefore if any man be in Christ, (This I love!) he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* That is the most glorious Scripture, "If any man be in Christ!"

Someone called the other day on our program, "To Every Man an Answer". They wanted to know if when you accepted Christ, everything of the past was erased, wiped off? I quoted this Scripture to them, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." They said, but, does that mean everything? I said, what does all things mean? It means all things. In the Greek, it means all things. In Hebrew, it means all things. In Spanish or whatever, it means all things are become new! A new creature, a new start, the past is obliterated, everything is new! What a glorious gospel we have to preach. People who have messed up their lives so horribly that it looks like there is no reclamation. And yet Jesus comes in. He washes with one felt sweep the past sin and guilt. Everything becomes new! Oh, praise God! Yes!

And now, ¹⁸*And all things are of God,* It's all new! It's a life and fellowship with God, a life in the Spirit. A life following after the things of the Spirit.

All things are of God, *who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ,* Once, we were enemies of God. We were in rebellion against Him. We were at enmity with God, but God offered a peace plan. He sent His Son to take our sin and to take our rebellion. And to take the result in the fruits of our sin and our rebellion, which was death, who died in our place that we might now live unto God through Him, the new life, through Christ Jesus. Where the old things are passed away and all things become new. All things are now of God. He has reconciled unto Himself by Jesus Christ.

and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; That is, Paul is talking about his ministry with that of bringing men into reconciliation with God. Letting them know that God had provided the way by which sinful man could be reconciled to a Holy God.

¹⁹*To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.* It's sort of couched in there, but I wonder if you picked it up--not imputing their trespasses unto them. Not accounting any longer any the trespasses against God. The record is clean! It's been erased! Every sin, every transgression you've ever committed has been erased. God is not imputing your transgressions against you any more.

When David came to this realization, he had sinned horribly. His sin became compounded, the sin of adultery and then the sin of murder, to try to cover the adultery. The prophet came to David and told him a story. And when David judged the guilty person and said that person should surely be put to death, the prophet said, David, you're the man. And David said, I have sinned. And the prophet said, and God has forgiven your sins. As quickly as it was confessed, it was forgiven. That's how anxious God is to forgive you. The moment he said, I have sinned, the prophet said, your sins are forgiven.

So David sat down and as he was so articulate, he said, (Psalms 32:1-2) Oh, how happy is the man whose sins have been covered, whose transgressions have been forgiven. Oh, what joy, what happiness! But then he went one step further. Here it is! Oh, how happy is the man to whom God does not impute sin! Who is that happy man? He is the man who is in Christ Jesus. He is the man who is walking after the Spirit. God doesn't even impute sin.

Now, that isn't a license, and oh God, help you if you think it's a license to sin. It's not! But we are still in these bodies of flesh and we are going to be subject still to imperfections. And sin is imperfection. Jesus said, be ye perfect even as My Father in heaven is perfect. Any thing less than that is sin. But oh, how happy is the man to whom God does not impute sin. Who is that man? He's is the man who is trusting in Jesus every day, walking with Jesus. It doesn't mean that I don't stumble, that I don't mess up now and then, but it does mean that God doesn't even put it down. He doesn't impute the sins any longer. Oh, think, if God put down all these things and then erased them. He would have worn the page out a long time ago. But, oh how blessed is the man to whom God does not impute sin. He is not imputing their trespasses unto them. He's committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ*, We are sort of ambassadors, God's ambassadors, God has sent us here as His representative. I speak for God. The ambassador in a foreign country, speaks for our nation. Our ambassador to England speaks for the United States. He talks to the diplomats over there and he speaks for the United States. He tells what our desires are and what we want to see and so forth. And he speaks as our representative.

So Paul said, we are ambassadors for Christ. I'm here to represent Jesus Christ to you *as though God did beseech you by us*: God is begging you or speaking to you by us.

And *we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God*. I'm here speaking for Jesus Christ, begging you in God's stead to be reconciled. Don't go on in sin! Don't go on in rebellion! Don't go on your own path, which will lead you to destruction! But turn and follow after Jesus Christ. Live now, your life for Him. Not for yourself or your selfish pleasures or ambitions or goals, but live now, your life for something that counts. Live your life for Jesus Christ.

²¹*For he hath made him* (that is Jesus Christ) *to be sin for us, who knew no sin*; I often wonder at what a shock it must have been to Jesus when God laid on Him the iniquities of us all. A perfect, pure, holy—He knew no sin, but God laid on Him the iniquities of us all. I wonder just how that must have shocked the Spirit. The pure Jesus, suddenly having dumped on Him all of the horrible murders, rapes, atrocities that you have read of, all dumped on Him. He laid on Him the iniquities of us all.

God made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; *that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*. Here is the deal that God is offering to you. You can turn all of your sin onto Him. He will take it! He died for it. And what will He give you in exchange? His righteousness, God will account you as righteous as Jesus Christ. He will give to you His righteousness, not some righteousness that you can now manufacture. Now you go out and keep these rules and you know, check off each day and make sure that you have done all of these things and you can have a righteous standing before God, providing that you are perfect. No, it's just, "Cast all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you." Your sins, all of the corruption and crud in your life, He bore it for you. He will cover you with His righteousness. How can you beat that? God made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made righteous, the righteousness of God in Him. Oh, what a wonderful savior is Jesus my Jesus. What a wonderful savior is Jesus, my Lord.

Father, we thank You tonight for this wonderful salvation, so great a salvation that You have offered to us, who were once alienated, who were once enemies. But Lord, now reconciled through the blood of Jesus Christ, now children of God through faith in Him, new creatures in Christ Jesus. The old things have passed away, all things, new. Oh Lord, we just want to sort of bask and revel in those truths as we just reflect on what Jesus has done for us. Such love, such wondrous love that God should love a sinner

such as I, how wonderful is love like this. Truly Lord, Your love constrains us to be ambassadors for Jesus Christ to bring Your truths to dying man, that they also may know the joy of sins forgiven, reconciliation with God. Help us Lord, this week, that we might be Your ambassadors to this foreign land, foreign to You, alienated from You. But may we be Your representatives, Lord, bringing to them the message of reconciliation. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.