

## Heaven: The Life Beyond

“Keep seeking the things above where Christ is seated...Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” – Paul 60 A.D.

### Part 4 “Insights Into Eternity”

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 4.16-5.9

**Subject:** Throughout the Scripture there are eternal truths. These truths are the basis of all our Christian values. Our belief in these values shapes our thinking, our behavior and our hopes. These truths help us to understand eternity and our future home in Heaven. Let’s look briefly at these important truths.

1. Things that are intangible are more important than those that are tangible. We live by faith in what we cannot see or touch. But we are confident by the physical evidence that God is real (Romans 1.19-20). Second Corinthians 5.7 states, “For we walk by faith and not by sight.”
2. Things that are invisible are more important than those that are visible. “While we look not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen” (2 Corinthians 4.18a). The invisible Holy Spirit, the holy angels and God’s divine presence surround us.
3. Things that are eternal are more important than things that are temporal. “For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4.18b). This earth and everything in it is temporary, but our life with God in Heaven is eternal (1John 2.17).
4. Our heavenly spiritual body will supersede our earthly human body. “Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Corinthians 15.49).
5. Our spiritual development of our inner man is more important than our outer man. “But though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day (2 Corinthians 4.16; see also 1 Timothy 4.8). “But let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God” (1 Peter 3.4).
6. The heavenly is of greater value than the earthly. “Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven” (Matthew 6.10). “Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth” (Colossians 3.2; see also 1 John 2.17).
7. The second birth is more important than the first birth. “Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3.3,7). Our spiritual healing is more valuable to us than physical healing. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old thing passed away; behold new things have come. Now all these things are from God” (2 Corinthians 5.17-18a).

**Survey:** Death is inevitable. It is not a happy subject for most. The Christian’s perspective is different from the rest of religious and secular thought regarding the afterlife. All religions are based primarily in the idea that “goodness” is the prerequisite for entrance to heaven. Secular thought dismisses an afterlife all together or regards it as an unknown that cannot be proven. Believers, on the other hand, have placed their trust in the Savior who said, “Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 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” (John 14.1-2). These lasting and comforting words are the assurance that Heaven is a real place, prepared for those who know Christ as Savior.

Eternal life in Heaven is the longing of the child of God. Our heart anticipates the moment when, “this perishable must put on imperishable and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15.53). Paul suffered enormously. It was to him a “light affliction.” But he looked forward, without any fear of death, to the moment when, “Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15.55). No other religion in the world offers such hope. There is no consolation so sweet as the words of the resurrected Christ, “Where I am there you may be also” (John 14.3). Each moment of life on this earth moves us closer to our final everlasting home. We are not to shirk with dread the thought of leaving this world. No, we are to welcome it.

Heaven is a family reunion. Throughout Paul’s letters he wrote in the first person plural. “We will not all sleep, but we will 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 imperishable, and we will be changed” (1 Corinthians 15.51-52). In this passage, notice the times Paul uses the words “we” and “us.” This is a reminder to all believers everywhere and from all past ages, that we will one day reunite as one family for all eternity. “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in Heaven and on earth derives its name” (Ephesians 3.14-15). We are all of one spiritual family and will be together for all eternity.

**Fact One: We Will Have A New Heavenly Body: 5.1**

***“For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”***

- A. Paul used the metaphor of the tent, house and building to describe our temporal and our eternal body. The tent will be torn down in death. The new building will be made without hands or without human efforts. The transformation of the body will be done supernaturally by God (Daniel 2.34-35; John 2.19; Colossians 2.11; Hebrews 9.11 Romans 8.18; 1 Corinthians 15.50-58; Philippians 1.23; 3.20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4.15-17)
- B. The word *tent* is used for our earthly body. John 1.14 states, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt (Gk. *skenoō*, literally “to pitch a tent”) among us.” The Old Testament tabernacle was a picture of our temporary dwelling on earth. It is clear that our existence on earth is only temporary and our eternal dwelling is in Heaven.

**Fact Two: We Yearn For This New Resurrected Body: 5.2-4**

***“For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.” (See also Revelation 22.20).***

- A. Paul used two metaphors at the same time. The house and the clothing both represent the same things. To be found naked is to be without a resurrected body. “Indeed,” used twice in this passage, was used to emphasize Paul’s earnest desire to be with the Lord.
- B. The ancient philosophers believed that the body would not exist in the afterlife. Paul contended that the soul would not remain naked, but would have a perfect resurrected body. Every temptation is part of our yearning for the new body!
- C. The mortal body with all its imperfections will be done away. The new life will be one of perfection and completion. Now we are burdened with the sinfulness of a human body. We spiritually groan and long for the day we will put on a perfect resurrected body.

**Fact Three: We Are The Fulfillment of God’s Eternal Purpose: 5.5 (see also John 6.37-40)**

***“Now he who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.”***

- A. God’s plans are eternal. They have always been. So all things continue according to His plan until He brings us safely to our final home (Acts. 20.27; 1 Peter 3.9; Isaiah 25.1).
  - “For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29.11).
  - And again the Psalmist wrote these comforting words, “Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders which You have done, and Your thoughts toward us” (Psalms 40.5).
  - “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1.6 2.13; Ephesians 1.4-5).
  - “So that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ephesians 3.10-11).
- B. The plan of God is the glorification of His Church. “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. And these whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified (Romans 8.28,30).
- C. The Holy Spirit in us is God’s pledge or guarantee that we will be glorified. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the body of the believer is God’s guarantee to each that He will fulfill His promise to us. The gift of the Holy Spirit to us is God’s pledge of what He has promised. Just as we cannot be separated from the Holy Spirit, neither can we be separated from Heaven. Just as He is in us, we will be with Him forever. We are now inseparable. That is God’s pledge.

**Fact Four: We Will Have Courage To Face Death: 5.6-8**

***“Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. We are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”***

- A. Paul reminded his readers that Christian courage is a product of faith. We are courageous in death because of our knowledge that while we are here on earth we prefer to be with the Lord in Heaven, our real home. Notice the number of times the word *home* is used.
- B. “I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day” (1 Timothy 4.7,8a).