

**WE HAVE
A FUTURE**

HOPE



2 Corinthians 5:1 – 8

Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 644–645.

“We have this ministry ... We have this treasure ... We [have] the same spirit of faith ... We have a building of God.”

- What a testimony Paul gave to the reality of the Christian faith!
- This “building of God” is not the believer’s heavenly home, promised in John 14:1–6.
- **It is his glorified body.**



PAUL'S TENT ANALOGY

Paul was a tentmaker (Acts 18:1 – 3), and here he used a “tent” to picture our “present earthly bodies”. A tent is a weak, temporary structure without much beauty, but the “glorified body” we shall receive will be eternal, beautiful, and never show signs of weakness or decay.



PHILIPPIANS 3:20 – 21 (NKJV)

²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

²¹ 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.

- Paul saw the human body as an earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4:7) and a temporary tent.
- Still, he knew that believers would one day receive an incredible glorified body suited to the glorious environment of heaven.

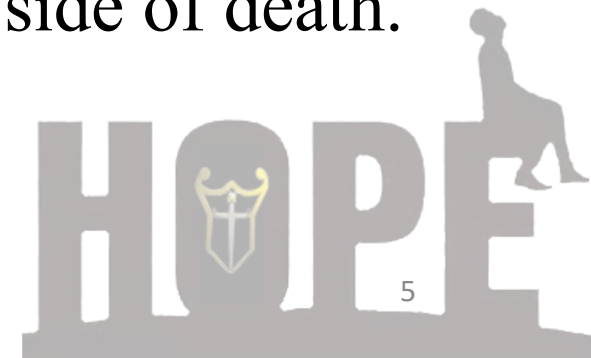


For we know (v. 1)

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1 (NKJV)

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.

- How do we know? Because we trust the Word of God. No Christian has to consult a fortune-teller, a spiritist, or a deck of cards to determine what the future holds or what lies on the other side of death.



God has told us all that we need to know in the pages of His Word.

Paul's "we know" connects with his "knowing" in 2 Corinthians 4:14, which relates to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:14 (NKJV)

knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.



**We know that He is alive;
therefore, we know that death
cannot claim us.**



JOHN 14:19 (NKJV)

“A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.

- If our tent is “taken down” (“dissolved”), we need not fear. The body is only the house we live in on earth.
- When a believer dies, the body goes to the grave, but the spirit goes to be with Christ.



PHILIPPIANS 1:20 – 25 (NKJV)

²⁰ according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

²¹ For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

²² But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.

²³ For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

²⁴ Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.

²⁵ And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith,



When Jesus Christ returns for His own, He will raise the dead bodies in glory, and the body and spirit shall be joined together for a glorious eternity in heaven.



1 THESSALONIANS 4:13 – 15 (NKJV)

¹³ But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.



1 THESSALONIANS 4:16 – 18 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.



We groan (vv. 2 – 5)

2 CORINTHIANS 5:2 – 5 (NKJV)

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

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

⁴ 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.

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



THE GLORIFIED BODY

Paul was not expressing a dark desire for death. His statement is just the opposite: he was eager for Jesus Christ to return so that he would be “clothed upon” with the glorified body.

He presented three possibilities, using the image of the body as a tent:

- (1) *Alive* — residing in the tent;
- (2) *Dead* — unclothed, out of the tent, “naked”;
- (3) *Clothed upon* — the transformation of the body at the return of Christ.



PAUL'S HOPE

Paul was hoping that he would be alive and on the earth at the return of Christ so that he might not have to go through the experience of death.

Paul used a similar picture in 1 Corinthians 15:51 – 58, and he used the idea of “groaning” in Romans 8:22 – 26.

The glorified body is called “a building of God, a house not made with hands” in 2 Corinthians 5:1 and “our house which is from heaven” in 2 Corinthians 5:2.

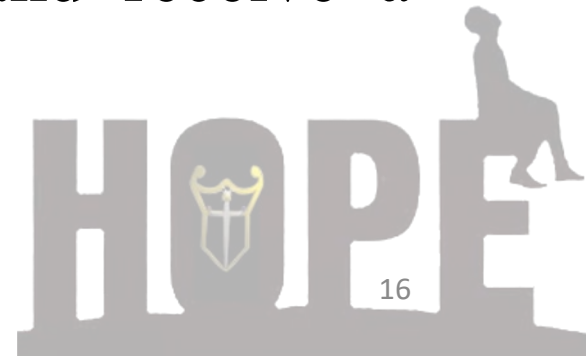


This is in contrast to our mortal bodies, which came from the dust of the earth.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:49 (NKJV)

And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

It is important to note that Paul was not groaning because he was in a human body but because he longed to see Jesus Christ and receive a glorified body. He was groaning for glory!



**This explains why death holds
NO terrors
for the Christian.**



Paul called his death a “departure.”

2 TIMOTHY 4:6 (NKJV)

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

- This Greek word for “departure” means “to take down one’s tent and move on”.
- But how can we be sure that we shall one day have new bodies like the glorified body of our Savior? We can be sure because the Spirit lives within us.



Paul mentioned the sealing and the earnest of the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 1:22 (NKJV)

who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Ephesians 1:13 – 14 (NKJV)

¹³ In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.



ENGAGED TO JESUS CHRIST

- The Holy Spirit dwelling in the believer's body is the “down payment” that guarantees the future inheritance, including a glorified body.
- In modern Greek, the word translated “earnest” means “engagement ring”.
- The church is engaged to Jesus Christ and is waiting for the Bridegroom to come to take her to the wedding.



We are always confident. (vv. 6 – 8)

2 CORINTHIANS 5:6 – 8 (NKJV)

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

⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight.

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

The people of God can be found in one of two places: either in heaven or on earth.



EPHESIANS 3:15 (NKJV)

from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

- **None of them** is in the grave, hell, or “intermediate place” between earth and heaven.
- Believers **on earth** are “at home in the body,” while believers who **have** died are “absent from the body.”
- Believers **on earth** are “absent from the Lord,” while believers **in heaven** are “present with the Lord.”



- Because he had this kind of confidence, Paul was not afraid of suffering, trials, or dangers.
- This is not to suggest that he tempted the Lord by taking unnecessary risks, but it does mean that he was willing to “lose his life” for the sake of Christ and the ministry of the Gospel.
- Paul walked by faith and not by sight.
- Paul looked at the eternal unseen, not the temporal seen (2 Cor. 4:18).



Heaven was not simply a destination for Paul: it was a motivation.

- Like the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11, he looked for the heavenly city and governed his life by eternal values.
- As we review this section of 2 Corinthians, we can see how Paul had the courage for the conflict and would not lose heart.
- He had a glorious ministry that transformed lives.



- He had a valuable treasure in the earthen vessel of his body, and he wanted to share that treasure with a bankrupt world.
- He had a confident faith that conquered fear, and he had a future hope that was both a destination and a motivation.
- No wonder Paul was “more than conqueror”! (Romans 8:37)



**Every believer in Jesus Christ
has these same marvelous
possessions and can find
courage for the conflict
through them.**

