

LESSON 13

AUGUST 29, 2021

UNIT III. FAITH GIVES US HOPE

BE CONFIDENT

DEVOTIONAL READING: Romans 7:14-26

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: 2 Corinthians 4:16–5:10

PRINT PASSAGES: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 5:1-10

KEY VERSE

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. (2 Corinthians 5:1, KJV)

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We know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. (2 Corinthians 5:1, NIV)

LESSON AIMS

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Acknowledge the hope that Paul, when faced with death, manifested in God’s eternal promise.
- Experience awe in the faith of family and friends who are facing their mortality.
- Develop a growing trust in God’s promise of eternal life through faith.

KEY TERMS

Affliction (4:17)—Greek: *thlipsis* (thlip’-sis): persecution; oppression; distress; tribulation; “troubles” (NIV).

Eternal (4:18)—Greek: *aiónios* (ahee-o’-nee-os): agelong; everlasting; endless.

Glory (4:17)—Greek: *doxa* (dox’-ah): praise; honor; splendor; majesty; magnificence, as in God’s presence.

Outward (4:16)—Greek: *exó* (ex’-o): outside; without; “outwardly” (NIV).

Renewed (4:16)—Greek: *anakainoó* (an-ak-ahee-no’-o): made new or restored.

Seen (4:18)—Greek: *blepó* (blep’-o): to be looked at or upon; perceived; discerned.

PREPARING THE LESSON

- Refer to the Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher's Edition for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.
- Review last week's student assignments ("Your Life" and Your World!").
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.
- Please note that you have the option of using your subscription bundle supplements, i.e., Lesson Scenario, Student Activity Sheet, SSL-AAG

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

People fear the fragility of life and the meaning of death. In weakness and death, where can any assurance be found? God gives believers in Jesus Christ an eternal, unseen place in Him that is guaranteed by the Spirit.

THE LESSON IN FOCUS

As they grow older, people tend to give more consideration to their mortality. Sooner or later, they begin to contemplate the reality that one day they will die. The reality of aging causes many adults to lose physical and mental vitality that directly impacts their quality of life. As the years roll on, most people witness the death of a parent, family member, spouse, or close friends. The absence of departed loved ones can prompt a strong desire to see them, as well as a curiosity concerning exactly what happens after death. While we process the physical losses of our mortality, we must likewise consider the spiritual implications of approaching death. Will God really reward every good deed? How will God punish disobedience? Should I fear dying or not? Although one's life may or may not have been significant in terms of worldly accomplishment, the ultimate question (and the only question that matters) is whether one has pleased God.

THE LESSON IN CONTEXT I

In today's lesson, Paul cautioned the Corinthians to remain vigilant because the things they had to endure presently were only temporary. Instead, they should keep focused on their true and eternal destiny with Christ in glory. With eternal hope in God through Christ Jesus, Paul encouraged the saints to be confident and remain focused—for the God who saved them would keep and sustain them. When believers rise from the dead we leave all that is earthly behind, from every care and worry, to the materialistic baggage that becomes bondage. Our bodies are renewed as a spiritual body fashioned by God: permanent, indestructible, and celestial. As believers, we are guaranteed a glorious future because God has created us for this very purpose (Philippians 3:21), working in us to will and to do His good pleasure in ways beyond our understanding as we submit by confident and complete faith in God through Christ Jesus (see Philippians 2:13). The Holy Spirit serves as our guarantor of a future promise, a foretaste of experiences while on earth of the glory that believers shall one day know. The Judgment seat is like the reward position at the Olympic Games. Those who belong to the family of God shall receive the reward for good things done in the body and experience the sadness at reward lost because of the useless things, because of their failure at times to be fit enough (compare 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 4:4; Romans 14:10-12). Thanks to God by means of Christ's redemptive

work and the presence and continual work of the Holy Spirit, we can remain confident through all of life's ups and downs, good deeds and bad, that God has sealed us and we have an eternal hope in glory with God.

OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below.)

1. Share a close encounter with death. Recall and share the thoughts that ran through your mind in the moment of your encounter. (If no close encounter, share when you reflect on your life and consider the end.)
2. What are some of your regrets?
3. With the time you have left, what can you do differently to make the world better?

INSIGHTS

Ideally, those who claim to live for the Lord Jesus Christ are ever growing in faith. As they do, their focus shifts (or it should) from physical and material considerations to ones that are spiritual and eternal. This growth and maturing in the faith enable them to relinquish the cares of this world and prepare to embrace their heavenly home. God is not only a God of love, grace, and mercy but also a God of judgment. Those who continue to walk with God learn to trust His sovereign authority regarding the distribution of both eternal reward and punishment.

EXPLORATION

Living as disciples involves regularly examining ourselves to determine if we are living in a manner that pleases God. Christians know that some matters of faith shall remain a mystery until we meet God face-to-face. Longevity is a blessing. As we embrace the reality of aging, or terminal illness that threatens to take us out "before our time," we must encourage ourselves and other believers to take comfort in the knowledge that when we see Jesus, our eternal bodies will be perfect and whole.

ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER

COMMENTARY ON 2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18

KJV

16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

NIV

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

The present tense of both verbs used in verse 16 indicates simultaneous action. The outward man corresponds to “earthen vessels” (2 Corinthians 4:7) and “earthly house” (2 Corinthians 5:1). The seeds of decay and dissolution are in the body from birth (see Romans 8:18-25; Hebrews 13:14). In verse 17, the writer introduces an alternate way of understanding adversity and trouble. He suggests that the things we regard as trouble work for, not against, us to accomplish an eternal glory that outweighs the burden of our declining mortality. Paul argues that trouble produces in us something immeasurably greater than what we have known in this life. “While we look” is a present participle, implying constant motion. As we internally look away from, in the sense of not focusing on, things that are temporary we are to focus on those things which are eternal. The word for “temporal,” from which we get the word temporary, comes from the Greek word *proskairos*, which means “ephemeral,” “short-lived,” “evanescent,” or “brief.” It is in contrast to the abiding and eternal—that which lasts. Eternity is the everlasting now. We live in the midst of it, though we cannot see it. When we reach our glorified state we shall see it fully. To get there, we must remain focused and walk by faith.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Questions:** What kinds of afflictions have hindered you from serving the Lord? Have you overcome them? If so, which lessons and strategies can you share to help others facing similar struggles?
- **Young Adult Question:** How can you encourage a fellow Christian to never lose heart or give up? Discuss the assurance of our eternal salvation.

COMMENTARY ON 2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-5

KJV

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.

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

3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

NIV

FOR WE know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

2 Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling,

3 because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.

4 For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

5 Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

The outlook is bright for those who walk by faith. As Christians, we can know the truth about the unseen world. The word *if* in verse 1 suggests uncertainty regarding the time but not concerning the fact. Tabernacles are very vulnerable to transition and even destruction as they are beat upon by the elements of this world. In time, they eventually wear down and are demolished or dissolved (as used in the text). The word is *kataluo* in the Greek and means “to tear down, demolish.” The body’s decomposition and deteriorating signifies the process of its exit from the earth into a more glorious state. There is assurance in the phrase “we have,” as the writer asserts without any doubt his faith in God and God’s promises for us. While we proceed by faith we also “groan” while in these bodies, indicating something distasteful in the present state. This groan is an earnest groan, a steadfast continual display of our desire to be with God and thus clothed by, with God, for God. The Greek verb used for “earnest” is an expression of vehemence or intensity and fervor of desire to accomplish that which is sought after. Verse 4 restates and expands the previous verses. Death is swallowed up in victory (see 1 Corinthians 15:54). Our forecast is sure because God has prepared us for Himself. The power and beauty of this promising forecast lies not only in the fact that God made us but in that He has given us His Spirit to sustain us in this life as we prepare for the next.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:** How can you be sure that your fate is certain with God eternally?
- **Young Adult Question:** Eternal life is the gift of God “#PIF” by Jesus’ blood. Discuss ways that Christians can develop growing trust in God’s promise of eternal life through faith.

COMMENTARY ON 2 CORINTHIANS 5:6-10

KJV

6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst 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, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

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.

NIV

6 Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.

7 For we live by faith, not by sight.

8 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

9 So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Paul drives home the point that death for the believer is not something to be greatly dreaded or feared. He writes that living on earth means being separated from the fullness of God's presence (verse 6). Yet, because we live by faith rather than sight (verse 7), we also realize that we can remain confident and steady even when our spirits are separated from our earthly bodies (at death). The verb used here for "walk" (*peripateo*) indicates the course of the Christian's whole life. Paul does not imply any desire to court or tempt death. The word willing indicates or denotes that which produces pleasurable satisfaction. He is satisfied with the fact that his faith has produced a future full of joy and peace. Because of this future assurance, Paul submits that believers ought to be willing to labor in these temporal, earthly bodies knowing that we will, in due time, be accepted by God into glory to reign with Him. Those who love God rather than fear Him can face physical mortality with confidence. Our eternal reward and destiny will be based not only on the grace of God, but also upon the words and deeds of our lifetimes.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:** What are some of the rewards received at Judgment? Take a moment to research what the Bible says about the rewards of the believer.
- **Young Adult Question:** In your own words, give a practical example of what it means to walk and live by faith and not by sight.

LIFE APPLICATION

Refer to Adult Book

(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

—This week, reflect on the times when you became weary and considered giving up on being faithful to God. When we are discouraged, we look for someone to blame, but our dedication to God is personal and should be permanent. List your past excuses and identify how you overcame them. If you are still struggling, acknowledge that as well.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

—This week, recall the names of members of your church (or Sunday school class) who have been missing for a while. Consider those whom you are aware of who have stepped away due to a misunderstanding or hurt feelings. Reach out, listen to their stories, and encourage them with the Word of God. Whatever the reason may be for their absence, pray and encourage them to return and become engaged in serving God within the circle of the community of faith. If the person is you, then seek a trusted confidante to hear your story of discouragement, hurt, or struggling faith. Be as open and honest as possible.

Refer to Young Adult Book

(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

—The world is God's creation, filled with beauty and excitement, and sometimes with pain and disappointment. God has called us to live our days with meaning and to make decisions that honor Him. Instead of loving the temporary things of this world, learn to pursue the things that matter most, as you prepare to spend an eternal future in the joy of God's presence.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

—It is not easy to live in a world filled with temptation, immorality, violence, and illness. Focusing on eternity offers a perspective that keeps our hearts from being overwhelmed by what our eyes see. Living by faith and not by sight allows you to move through life with the goal of pleasing God in everything you do.

NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

The lesson topic for Sunday, September 5, 2021, is "Celebrating with Song." The Devotional Reading is Psalm 105:1-2, 37-45, the Background Scriptures are Exodus 14:1–15:21, and the Printed Text is Exodus 15:11-21.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, today we pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Help us to remain faithful to the work You have designed and destined for us. Help us to draw other and not deter others from getting closer to You. We faithfully believe there is a reward stored up for us. So, let us serve with confident hope in our eternal rest with Christ Jesus. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

MONDAY, August 30 “God Hardens Pharaoh’s Heart” (Exodus 14:1-9)

TUESDAY, August 31 “Don’t Just Do Something; Stand There!” (Exodus 14:10-20)

WEDNESDAY, September 1 “Victory by the Sea” (Exodus 14:21-31)

THURSDAY, September 2 “Blessed Be God, Our Savior” (Luke 1:67-75)

FRIDAY, September 3 “Victory in Jesus” (1 Corinthians 15:51-58)

SATURDAY, September 4 “Moses Sings of God’s Triumph” (Exodus 15:1-10)

SUNDAY, September 5 “Moses and Miriam Praise God” (Exodus 15:11-21)