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Father, we thank you for this day that you've given us. We thank you Lord, for your mercy and your goodness. We thank you for the grace, Lord, that you have given to us. Father, I pray as we come before you tonight that your spirit will conform us to the image of your son. That we will become more like you and that we will glorify you as we are renewed to the conforming of our minds.

Father, we pray for everyone still suffering from natural tragedies. Father, I pray that you will protect them and that you will give comfort and encouragement. And Father, I pray for the restoration of their livelihoods. Father, I pray that you be with us now. In Jesus name.

Amen. Good.

Good evening everyone and welcome back to Church of the Bible. For everyone visiting us virtually, I will remind you that we ask that you please stay muted for the duration of our service until until the end.

As we continue, we are going to be in the book of Second Corinthians. We'll be in chapter five, picking it from where we left off last week. And just remember last week, to recap what we saw, Paul had.

I'm going to remove this person from the meeting.

All right, Sorry, everyone. I just had to take care of something here and I've lost my train of thought, so I apologize. But picking up where we left off last week and recapping what we saw last week. We saw last week that the reason we do not give up, the reason that we have hope, that we renounce secret and shameful things, that we don't act deceitfully or distort the word of God, is because of the mercy that God has given us. It's also for that reason that we have this ministry to preach the Gospel.

And we're going to see more about that tonight. But I also want to remind you what Paul had told us, that those who do not receive the Gospel, those who ignore it or reject it, who it seems concealed to, is because the God of this age, being Satan, has blinded their minds from seeing the light of the Gospel. We also saw that we need to not hope for or look to things that are seen, because what is seen will perish. It's temporal, but we look to what is unseen, for what is unseen is eternal. And remember, he compared our afflictions that we have today.

He calls them light, no matter how big they seem. He calls our afflictions and trials light compared to what he says, the absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory in verse 17 of chapter four. So that's going to bring us to chapter five tonight. We're going to start by reading verses one through five. Paul says, for we know that if our earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal dwelling in heaven, not made of hands.

Indeed, we groan in this tent, desiring to put on our heavenly dwelling, since when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. Indeed, we groan while we are in this tent, burdened as we are, because we do not want to be unclothed, but clothed, so that our mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now, the one who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as a down payment. This is a hopeful and encouraging passage. He tells us there's certain things we know.

We know that our earthly tent is going to be destroyed. Now, our earthly tent is our bodies, the physical, mortal bodies that we live in today. And this idea of tent comes all the way back to. It goes to the Old Testament. But as far as New Testament origins goes Back to John chapter one, in verse 14, it says that the word which is God became flesh and made his tabernacle amongst us, right?

He dwelt among us. Tabernacle was a tent. And the imagery used in John chapter one is from the Tabernacle of God, or the. The Old Covenant makeshift temple that traveled with them until they built the temple in Jerusalem. So he tells us that this body of ours will be destroyed.

He also tells us that we groan, we have pain, we have suffering.

It's a consequence of sin all the way back to the beginning. Beginning sin has corrupted God's creation. So we have death, we have disease, we have different sufferings. And he says that we desire to put on our heavenly dwelling, our heavenly tent. Now, about this heavenly tent.

He tells us a couple of things here. He says that it's a building from God, an eternal dwelling, not made, made with hands. The buildings that we make with hands, our homes, our church buildings, stores, community centers, they not only will be destroyed, but are destroyable. We've seen in the past month devastation from hurricanes, tornadoes, and even here in our local community, we've seen devastation from, from winter weather and snow that has brought down trees and destroyed some people's homes, cars. So we've seen that we indeed we suffer and that our buildings can be destroyed.

But God's building, not made with human hands, is eternal. It will last forever, to never be destroyed or corrupted. Now he tells us that the one who prepared us for this purpose, so everyone who has received the light of Christ and who will enter this heavenly dwelling is being prepared to enter this heavenly dwelling by God. And it says that he gave us the Spirit as a down payment. I very regularly remind everyone that salvation cannot be lost.

This verse here describes why it cannot be lost. God gave us His Spirit as a down payment. He has sealed us. The Spirit does two things. We read several weeks ago that it seals us.

That seal is a mark of ownership from God. God saying that we are His. But it's also a down payment, right? And remember, in the context in which this is written, be glad you missed what just came on the screen. This person got into our meeting and injected naked men and women masturbating.

So be glad you missed that.

So after this meeting, guys, I will be changing the password to access church. I will send that to everybody before Wednesday when we meet again.

Okay? That had totally derailed my train of thought and where we were, the Wow, I am lost, guys. So, yeah, salvation can't be lost. Down payment, right? A down payment is A legal term in the Greek world, the Roman world, it's a legal term today too, but has less enforcement.

Right. Today, if we place the down payment on a home, enter the contract, we could still back out. We lose the good faith payment, but we can back out. In the Greek and Roman world, a down payment was legally binding. To the extent you could not back out once you had made a down payment, you have obligated yourself to follow through with whatever purchase that was.

And we have to remember that we, the Bible says, are a purchase of God. He purchased us. The legal term specifically is he ransomed us. We were guilty of a multitude of sins, we had a penalty, and God paid for that penalty. He paid a ransom to redeem us.

So he has purchased us. And the Spirit of God is a down payment. So this is the guarantee that not only are we saved, but we will have salvation.

Let's read verses 6 through 15. He says, we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. In fact, we are confident and we would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. Therefore, whether we are at home or away way, we make it our aim to be pleasing to Him.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. Therefore, since we know the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade people what we are is plain to God, and I hope is also plain to your consciences. We are not commending ourselves to you again, but given you an opportunity to be proud of us so that you may have a reply for those who take pride in outward appearance rather than in heart.

For if we are out of our mind, it is for God. If we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ compels us, since we have reached this conclusion that one died for all, and therefore all die, and he died for all, so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised all right. So we are confident. He says right.

This down payment that I just talked about, the Holy Spirit. We are confident in the salvation that we have received. And because of that we can be confident, confident in this life. Now, even though we are away from where we ultimately want to be from heaven, even though we are away from the Lord physically, we're not with Him. We can be confident as we walk in this Life, he says, for we walk by faith and not by sight.

The object in which we are hoping to obtain, which is eternal life, which is Christ our Lord, he is not seen. And we don't walk by what we see. The world tells us what we can see, hear, interact, right? It tells us a different story.

When hurricanes come and wipe away your home, the world does not tell you that you are secure, that you have a hope. When cancer takes over your body or your child's body, the world does not say you have hope. But we don't walk by what we can see. We walk by the faith that we have, the evidence that we have that God will keep his promise, and we walk in accordance to that. And he says, we are confident of this.

We prefer to be home with the lo. That's the preference. That's the goal. And because we prefer that, he says, whether we are with the Lord or we are in this life, it is our aim to be pleasing to him.

So whether we're in heaven or here, we should be pleasing God, worshiping God, serving him. Walk in not as our own lives, but as Christ's life. And it says, we will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to be repaid for what we have done, good or evil, even us who are saved, who are going to heaven, we will still appear before the judgment seat. Our judgment isn't going to be a consequence of heaven or hell, but our judgment will still be a consequence of reward. We will appear before the judgment seat and be repaid, whether good or evil, he says.

And for this reason, because we know this, we try to persuade people. Guys, preaching the gospel is not taking a hammer and beating someone over the head or holding them at gunpoint and forcing them to accept what we have. We cannot force anyone to believe in God. We cannot force anyone to let him change their life. But we can persuade.

And that's what Paul says. We try to persuade people. We try to persuade you because we know there's a heaven and hell, and we know there is reward and we know that there is life or death. So we try to persuade you for your good, because we love you, and for the glory of God, because we love him, that you would come to Christ. Now Paul makes a defense.

He says, what we are is plain to God. Remember that the entire background of this book is that there are people who say that Paul is not an apostle because he suffers, or Paul was not an apostle because he failed to return to Corinth. Like you said, Paul is not an apostle because of the dispute between him and this unknown person and his gospel, the gospel of Christ was at stake. It was being questioned. So that's the whole background.

And so here's his argument. What we are is plain to God and hope. It's plain to you. He says, I'm not commending myself, but rather trying to give you what you need to know to have an answer for those who say something to you, who question you. Paul's goal here is to convince them that the gospel in which he preached is valid.

In Galatians, chapter 1, verses 8 and 9, here's how valid Paul wants us to know the gospel is. He says that even if he himself or an angel from heaven appeared and taught something different to accuse that person to hell, he says, my gospel is valid, and even if I myself come to you and change, it accuse me to hell. So he wants them to be persuaded at that and to have a defense when they are questioned.

He also tells us, as he regularly does, that Christ died for us. He died for every one of us. That we, he says, all have died. We will die to the world, but that we may live. And he says this.

He died for us so that we would no longer live for ourselves. This life we have in Christ, it is a gift, a precious gift. But it's not for ourselves. It's so that we can live for the One who bought us, who ransomed us and was raised from the dead.

Let's look at verses 16. We're going to go through 21. He says, from now on, then we do not know anyone from a worldly perspective, even if we have known Christ from a worldly perspective yet now we no longer know him in this way. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away and see, the new has come.

Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and is given the ministry of reconciliation that is in Christ. God is reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. Since God is making his appeal through us, we plead on Christ's behalf. Be reconciled to God.

Be reconciled to God. He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. This is. This entire passage is a major statement and it is the critical theme for the entire book. Letter of second Corinthians I myself would say this is the most important part in first Corinthians because we no longer live for the world or of the world.

We no longer see things through the eyes of the world. He says, we look at everything in a spiritual, heavenly perspective where we should, because we don't live for the world. We don't treasure the world, we don't treasure belongings, we treasure heaven. And so he says this. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is new.

The old has died and passed away, and the new has come. Paul tells us, we read this earlier, whether you were a murderer, a thief, an adulterer, a liar, whatever you were, he says now you were sanctified and cleansed. So wherever you were that has died, it's gone, it no longer exists. But you are a new creation in God.

You have been reconciled, says reconciled to Himself through Christ. So this is important. We do not reconcile with God in the way that we reconcile with each other. If you wrong me or I wrong you, we come and we reconcile together. As we work together to rebuild a damaged relationship, we do not reconcile ourselves to God.

He has reconciled us to Himself, and that's critical because we could not reconcile ourselves. We could not pay the debt that we owed.

And then he has given us the ministry of reconciliation. So once he reconciles us to Himself, he gives us the ministry and the responsibility to preach that reconciliation to others. And he says, this is how God reconciled us to Himself, by not counting our trespasses against us. So we were murderers, thieves, liars, adulterers, whatever else. We had a trespass, we had a penalty, and he did not count it against us.

And he tells us how he did not count it against us. Because how could a just God with a holy law and who is holy himself, not hold you accountable for your sin? Well, it tells us telling. It says he made the one who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become his righteousness. So the one who knew no sin died and took on our sin, paid the penalty for our sin, even though he did not know to exchange his righteousness for our sin, that we could exchange our sin for his righteousness, that we could be holy and righteous in the sight of God.

A holy and righteous God was able to do it because he was able to ransom us. Therefore, he says, we are ambassadors for Christ, and God makes his appeal through us. What. What's an ambassador? An ambassador is a legal term.

It's a position. It's a person who represents either another person or a government. The U.S. ambassador to Mexico officially represents the U.S. to Mexico.

We are ambassadors for Christ and for his king kingdom. If we have him in us, we represent him, and you can't separate that. And he makes his appeal to others to be saved through us.

So Paul says, we plead. And I plead. He says, be reconciled to God. There is no reason to go to hell, no reason to pay the penalty.

He who knew no sin became sin for you, that you would be saved, that you could be in a glorified body, that you could have a hope.

And as he says it, confidence.

And that confidence, that hope is something we offer you tonight on behalf of Christ. He pleads through us. He says, be reconciled to me.

Being reconciled means that we admit who we are, that we are sinners and cannot save ourselves. It means believing that Jesus Christ is the God man, the creator of heaven and earth who came down here. It means confessing him as your Lord, saying, I will no longer dictate my life, but I will obey and follow you. And he says, if you confess with your heart that Jesus is with your mouth, that Jesus is the Lord, and believe in your heart that he was raised from the dead, that you would be saved. If you're ready to do that here in our closing prayer, I will invite you to confess those things to God after service.

Today we will not have communion because of the people getting into service and injecting these images. I do not want to in any way destroy that sacred communion. So we will not partake until next week. So when the password is changed and. And as a reminder, I will be changing the password this week to prevent that from happening.

So everyone will get a new password from me by the end of the. By Wednesday for sure. For those of you who are ready to ask God for this gift and to believe in Him, I invite you here in our closing prayer to verbalize that to him with me. I'll see everyone else Wednesday at 6:30 as we continue our study in Luke. Let's pray.

Father, I admit that I am a sinner, that I can't save myself, that I am a wretched person. And I believe that Jesus Christ is the creator of heaven and earth, that he did come in the form of man, that he did live perfectly and did die and did raise from the dead. And I confess you, Lord Jesus, as my God and King, as my Lord, to remove my crown and follow you. I ask you, Lord, for this gift. I ask you to make me a new creation and reconcile me to yourself and Father, as ambassadors of you and the Lord Jesus Christ, I pray that you will plead through us because we know of heaven and hell.

And care for our family, friends, neighbors and co workers that you would appeal through us to them to be reconciled to you and that you would be glorified. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.