

2 Corinthians 5:6-10

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Date: 23 June 2024

[0 : 00] I desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together. And we're in the Word of God. We're in 2 Corinthians chapter 5. We're going to start in verse 6. I'm going to read down to verse 10. So 2 Corinthians chapter 5, starting in verse 6 and going down to verse 10.

This will be our text this morning. The Word of God says this, Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, for we walk by faith and not by sight.

We are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore, we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

You may be seated. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verses 6 through 10. We've been making our way through the book of 2 Corinthians, and you know it.

[1 : 01] Some of you have heard this introduction over and over again, and some of you can give this introduction about as well as I can, but that's good because we always want to make sure that we take the text within context. We know that Paul is writing to the church at Corinth so much differently than when he wrote 1 Corinthians.

He is not writing to admonish, to correct, or to rebuke. Rather, he is writing to encourage the church to remain faithful in the society that God has put them in. He is calling that they may live out their faith accordingly and accurately so that they may be a testimony to a watching world.

Corinth was a very strategic city, not just politically and economically, but also for the church because they had the opportunity to affect multitudes of individuals from various backgrounds.

That opportunity also presented with its challenges. That is, if they were not authentic in their walk, those various backgrounds would permeate the church, and they would begin to look more like society rather than being those who transformed society.

So Paul is calling the church to live out an authentic faith, much like today. The same word calls the church to do that. Paul makes a great shift somewhere near the end of the second chapter.

[2 : 07] Paul is really qualifying his love for the church. You remember, right? The church kind of doubted his love and thought maybe he was not being as truthful when he wrote 1 Corinthians saying that he was on his way there, but he is really not, he's stepping up to the challenge and he is encouraging them with a display of his love.

And then he gets sidetracked. This great holy discourse in the end of second chapter, all the way through the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and into the seventh chapter, and he will pick it back up halfway through the seventh chapter.

But he begins to speak on his ministry, the ministry assignment that God has given him and how they've walked in that ministry. Now, if you remember, as we've looked at the text, we can't say, oh, well, Paul here is referring to his life and those who are with him.

No, he is referring to the reality that God has called each and every one of us to a ministry and how we ought to live in that ministry and how we ought to live it out effectively for the glory. And he starts this by saying that he was being put on parade as a captive of Christ.

Paul does not say these things bear repeating, and they bear repeating because they have implication to how we interpret everything that follows that. Until we get to halfway through the seventh chapter and we're going back to Paul's love for the church, we need to understand this.

[3 : 25] Paul says he's in a parade. He's not the feature one in the parade. He's just one of a multitude in the parade. And he is in the parade before Christ. Christ is the king of kings.

He's the Lord of lords. He has the victor's crown upon his head. He is the one who is parading those he has taken captive. And Paul says, I am one of those whom he has taken captive.

He is the spoils of the war. Christ has won the battle, and he's put the spoils before him as he parades them through this life. Paul says, that's me. Christ took me captive.

Friend, if you've accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you have been taken captive by Christ. He has set you free by bringing you into his bounty of his reward.

And he puts you on display in the world. Paul says, I'm one of a multitude of throngs here that are before him. I'm but one. But he is walking shoulder to shoulder with others who are the same thing.

[4 : 21] They are ministers. They are a fragrant aroma unto God of Christ. That bears repeating. You are not an aroma to this world. You are an aroma to God, to us, to Christ.

That is, it doesn't matter what the world says about you. It doesn't matter if the world says you stink. It doesn't matter if you offend the world. You are an aroma unto God for Christ. And you are doing these things as a reasonable service of worship.

And Paul begins to dictate how he is being used in this ministry. And then he begins to shift a little bit about his focus because he declares that we must endure hardship and trials and struggles and all these things.

Now, I'm going somewhere with this and I know I have to build it up to get here, right? Because I don't want you to forget everything we've heard up to this point. That the ministry is not an easy place to be. We're not talking about vocational ministry.

We're talking about being in Christ. It's not an easy place to be. Jesus himself said that if they persecuted me, they will persecute you. That if they hate me, they will hate you, right?

[5 : 22] Because you are identified with him. There are moments of victory. Sure, we call them mountaintop experiences. There are moments of battle, which is in the valley. We understand all of these things.

But we are there to be used and to endure and to push through. And then Paul begins to say in the end of chapter 4 how he fixes his eyes on things eternal.

And then we looked at this truth that is contained in verses 1 through 5 of the 5th chapter and that is a truth of life. And that great truth in the first five verses of the 5th chapter are the truth that is applied in all the therefores that follow it.

And there are a number of therefores in that 5th chapter and we introduced two of them this morning. So we need to understand the truth which was last week. I'm not going to re-preach that sermon even though this will be a good time to do it.

That way we can get it all together, right? But we're not going to do it. The truth that there is eternal life coming. That in Christ this is not all there is. That we know in Christ someday we will be with him in glory.

[6 : 25] That we know these are facts to be known. These are truths with a capital T. These are not thoughts. These are not opinions. It is the reality that this life is not it.

That this flesh is but a tent and someday we will have a house whose builder is God. A house not made with hands. If you remember, oh, the great application there is that we will be as he is because Christ was given a body at his resurrection not made with hands.

Paul tells them in Acts chapter 17 that God dwells in the temple not made with hands. And then we go to the book of Hebrews and Jesus presents himself in the temple not made with hands. And then one day we will stand in a body not made with hands.

So the truth is that in Christ someday there will be this great transformation and we will be as he is like he is where he is. Now that truth dictates everything that follows that.

So truth without application is useless information. I've told you that time and time again. If a truth doesn't do anything to you or about you or for you, it means nothing. Because truth has to have application.

[7 : 27] We begin to see the application of that truth now. And it is the daily impact of eternal life. What impact does that have upon us?

We sing about it just a moment ago in Christ alone. There's no power in death, right? The sting of death has been removed. Because in Christ, when he stands, we know that we will stand someday with him.

There's no power in death anymore. So what application does that have in our daily lives? That, by the way, my friend, is not something that we can say, well, I'm glad that matter is settled.

Now I'm gonna go and live the rest of my life. No, that matter is what dictates how we live the rest of our life. The reality that death has been defeated now dictates how we live out our lives.

It has a daily impact or it ought to have a daily impact upon it. We know that we are shifting to the application because we read that great word, therefore. Since this truth is true, therefore, it says, being always of good courage and knowing that while we are home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, for we walk by faith and not by sight, we are of good courage.

[8 : 40] Number one, yes, I'm finally gonna get to my points. Number one, the impact of eternal life on our daily life is it empowers our steps. It empowers our steps. In two, well, three verses, two, when you count verse seven, it's a very short one.

So in three verses, Paul makes two great declarations repeatedly. He says, being of good courage, being of good courage. He says, therefore, being always of good courage. And then in verse eight, he says, we are of good courage.

It's amazing. He says that this truth, this reality that someday this tent of flesh will be cast off and we will be given a house of eternal nature that God has created for us, it has this one implication upon his life that he is of good courage.

Now, you just have to go back to the last chapter and see the suffering and the persecutions and all the endurance. And Paul speaks of this quite often. By the way, Paul wasn't one who always told you everything was going good, right?

When Paul wrote you a letter, he would tell you what was going on in his life. He would tell you about the problems and the struggles and he would name, I love this about Paul. Paul would call people out by name who did him wrong.

[9 : 47] I don't know about you, but I like that. He said, I have nothing to do with this individual, but he did me much harm. Some of us said, oh, everything's good. And he wasn't doing it in a disparaging way. He was just telling the truth because he was an individual of truth.

But he says, these things do not discourage me because he says, I'm always of good courage. Because the reality of eternal life empowers our everyday steps.

It's amazing when we begin to look at these things. I said it Wednesday night, so some of you that were here Wednesday night or a little bit ahead, if you go to the book of Revelation and you open up the book of Revelation and you're reading through it and you get there towards the end, near chapters, you get into chapter 20 and you have the judgment seat of Christ and get into 21.

And you have those who are present around the throne of heaven and they're present with the king of kings. And he speaks of the reality there in the 21st chapter about the marriage supper of the lamb, right?

Which we're going to eat and it's going to be wondrous. And it starts speaking of those who overcome, they will be invited to this marriage supper of the lamb. And then there is this listing, this listing of those who will not be present.

[10 : 49] And the very first one listed are cowards. Cowards and unbelievers. And then we get into the listing of people we'd expect to be there.

The idolaters, the fornicators, immoral people. But the first two that are listing are cowards and unbelievers. But Paul says here twice that the reality, the truth that is settled, that there is eternal life, it puts us as people of good courage.

Because repeatedly in the book of Revelation, especially if you read the letter to the seven churches, the letters to the seven churches, there's always, but to he who overcomes, but to he who overcomes, but to he who overcomes.

We are told repeatedly in scripture that our Christian walk is a walk of overcoming. It is not one of our own strength for sure. It is not one of our own doings and our own ability, but it is one of us overcoming.

It is overcoming trials and tribulations and struggles and temptations. And to do those things, my friend, we must be people of good courage. But we cannot be people of courage when our focus is on the things of this world because the things of this world are rapidly discouraging us.

[12 : 01] But the reality, the truth that is settled, that empowers our every step is that there will be a day where we will be with him and therefore we can be courageous in the sight of everything that comes against us.

Because see, cowardly and unbelieving actually go hand in hand. All sin is essentially a sin of unbelief. And it is an unbelief that is rested in the cowardice of self-preservation.

Because good courage is one who says, I'm not in control of where I'm going. Good courage is one who says, I don't have to save my life. It's already been saved. Good courage is one who says, I will live my life for his glory.

One of those who died at Auschwitz during World War II, the German camp was Maximilian Kolbe, who was a priest who one day had this vision when he was a very young man, Christ was calling to himself.

And he saw in this vision two crowns, he says, a crown of white and a crown of red. And one was standing for a crown of purity and the other one was a crown of suffering. And Kolbe was kind of wrestling within himself as Christ was calling to himself.

[13 : 06] He said, I will have both of those. I want to have both of those. I want to be both pure and I want to give my life to the cause of Christ. Fast forward a number of years, he ends up getting all kinds of doctors and all kinds of degrees. And he's being used of the Lord to teach people of Christ.

He ends up in a concentration camp and he's there. And it's during that concentration camp. Some people had escaped and left. And as was the custom during that camp, they had a number of people standing out and they had been standing there all day waiting for the captive of these ones who had escaped.

Since they couldn't catch them, they said, okay, so 10 people will give their life for the 10 people who escaped. And they began to call them out. One man that the German soldiers called out, cried out and started begging for mercy. And he was actually a commander in the Polish army.

He says, don't do it, spare my own life. And they kind of laughed at him because that's what they want, that weakness, right? But Maximilian stepped up and said, I'll take his place. He said, I'll be one who takes his place. And the Germans thought, well, it doesn't really matter.

This man, they're all going to die anyway. So they ended up putting him in a starvation cell where he proclaimed the gospel and he did so for the next two weeks until he would not die. Eventually died by lethal injection. But the man that he took his place did not die until 1996.

[14 : 12] And Maximilian Kolbe died in 1941 because, see, he was willing to give his life for someone else's. How? Because he had already, read the gospel of John, passed out of death and into life.

That's courage. It's living according to the conviction that this life is not it. And it is not crying out.

It is not saying that I want to die. It is the reality that there will be a day where I'm called into his presence and it is living with good courage. It empowers our steps. And we have to ask ourselves, is this the empowering motive of our step?

Number two, it enlarges our vision. Verse seven says, for we walk by faith and not by sight. It enlarges our vision. See, this truth, this reality that someday we will be eternally with him causes us to see things different.

The truly courageous are not found in those things which we see, but rather in the things which we do not see. And it is by faith that we understand that there is a whole different realm. And it is a spiritual realm and we don't want to get, you know, we border on getting charismatic here.

[15 : 22] I know that scares us a little bit in Baptist churches, but we understand this reality that there is a whole other realm other than the physical. God himself says so in the book of Isaiah, for my ways are not your ways, as high as the heavens are above the earth are my thoughts above your thoughts.

And all this reality that we see, but it is those who walk by faith. It says in the book of Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 11, that they set their mind on a city above, right? On somewhere else other than this life.

And this reality impacts us every day because it enlarges our vision. It causes us to see things as they truly are, not as they appear to be. Because the word sight really means as they appear.

Too many people live their life by appearance, not necessarily just their appearance, but how things appear to be. But this is not the reality of what they are. We understand that appearance has a great impact upon us.

And there's things that we can test and see and observe and all these scientific equations right there. And I understand it, but they want to live their life as a scientific method of, you know, see, observe, repeat, and do all this other things, test it.

[16 : 22] And they want to see it. They want to be able to handle it. They want to be able to feel it. They want to be able to know it. But this enlarges our vision. It causes us to see things differently, living according to another world, another realm, understanding that what we see, as Paul says at the end of chapter four, that these things are but temporal, that they are passing away.

But we are looking at those things which are eternal. Great scientists today, at least people who refer to themselves as great scientists, and most often are atheists or agnostic, would tell you that the onus is on you to defend God or even to declare that there is a God, that you must be the one who proves it because all the scientific research goes far beyond all this thing, and science has discovered all these other realities.

What they fail to tell you is that the only reason we have any scientific discoveries is because the fathers of science, at least we'll refer to it as modern day science, lived life according to another world and knew that what they saw was not it.

And they began to question the existence of things that they could observe and said that there must be something greater. And they began to look at it and they began to test and understand this reality. I was sharing with someone this morning, you know, centuries before people developed this telescope and realized that the heavens are expanding, Isaiah said, God rose the heavens out like a scroll.

There are great truths that science is just now catching up with. The reality that when the world came out of the dark ages and some nations progressed and some nations stagnated and some nations digressed, we understand why.

[17 : 47] Because when you begin to look at those nations who had advanced going into those ages, they did not go any further. But the ones who did were those who had a Judeo-Christian root and a faith and a heritage to them.

Those who understood that there was a maker of man and that he cared about man and that he loved man. And they began to see things of a different world. Man was not just there to meet our needs. Man was made in the image of God.

And since man was made in the image of God, there must be something about man and there must be something that we must do. And they began to look around the heavens and the advancements began to take place from there. It is astounding when we realize we can see things and our whole vision is enlarged because there's another world coming.

This is not it. This is not all there is. That's a good place to... I'm not going to say amen because you guys will throw a sign up, but that's a good place to give a hallelujah.

This is not it. Some of you have no idea what I'm talking about. I got an amen crowd in the balcony. They have signs. They put them up for me. They did it for me Wednesday night. It's really cool. But if I told you all when they were putting them up, you all would look at them and I don't want you all to do that.

[18 : 52] But anyway, because they said, you know, when you say that's a good place, say amen and nobody does it, we'll throw a sign up for you. Anyway, complete side note. Good job. Way to go, brother. You said you were going to do it and you did it to me.

But it is a reality that this is not all there is because if we're living for this, you have every reason to be discouraged, to be cowardly, to be disheartened.

You have every reason. But when we enlarge our vision and we begin to see that we walk by faith and not by sight, we begin to understand these realities are coming to us. Number three, it exchanges our desires.

See, this truth of one day being present with Christ begins to exchange our desires. Look at what it says in verse eight. For we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

Paul says, my preference is to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Now, Paul was not suicidal. Paul didn't have all these dark images of just desiring death. Read all of the writings of Paul.

[19 : 54] Paul understood that to live was Christ, but to die was gain, right? Paul is just clearly stating here that his preference was to be where Christ was at, that he was not living for himself.

It was not self-preservation. It was not self-exaltation. It was not even self, you know, promotion. None of these things were going on. Paul says, to the root of the being, my preference is to be with Christ.

Friend, you only get that when Christ has taken you captive and you fall in love with the Savior because I promise you, and it's a bad way of saying it, we all love a lot of us.

We love our life naturally, and we do everything we can to preserve our life naturally. Naturally, I love me a lot of me. Supernaturally, that desire is transformed and exchanged from self-preservation to being with Christ and Christ's presence and Christ's exaltation.

See, Paul says that my desire is to be with Christ, that that's what I prefer, but if he wants me here, then I'll stay here and I'll labor as long as I'm here.

[21 : 08] What if we asked ourselves that question every day? What is our greatest preference today? If we're honest, quite honestly, we would prefer that today would be an easy day and that we would get along just fine, and I'm just being honest, I'm preaching to the preacher a little bit here.

My preferences most often concern me. But when we exchange that desire and we want to prefer to be with Christ rather than to be in this life, all of a sudden, how we live today is changed.

It is impacted because it's no longer just about ensuring that everything I do today will make it better for me tomorrow because I know that tomorrow I may be in his presence.

It will be a preparation for that because then he goes on a little bit further and he gets into verse 9 and there's another therefore, right, which is another application of that great truth. Therefore, we also have as our ambition, he says, it's our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to him.

So he says, since now, I have exchanged my desires. I prefer to be with Christ. Now it changes my ambitions because, see, this is why it has such great impact. If your preference is for yourself, then you will be ambitious about what benefits yourself.

[22 : 25] But if your preference is to be with Christ, then you will be ambitious about what it's going to take when you're with Christ. And if we prefer to stay here and if we prefer to make ourselves at home here, then we will be ambitious.

Oh, we'll take every promotion, we'll take every, and we won't consider the eternal impact of these things because I promise you, not everything offered to you is bad. I say this cautiously.

Sometimes, as believers, we have to walk away from good things because God has a better thing. But if we're preferring to meet our own needs and we're preferring to make ourselves and make this and that and this and that and it's all about us, if our preference is self-preservation, self-exaltation, self-promotion, self-concern, or even concern for other people, Jesus said it this way, he who loves mother, father, son, daughter, or even wife more than me is not worthy than me.

So if our preference is for anything attached to this world rather than being, preferring to be with Christ, then our ambitions will be for the things of this world.

See how it impacts us. He says, since that is my preference, then my ambitions, desires, are that I would live a life pleasing to him whether here or there.

[23 : 59] The reason we see so little sacrificial living among us, including myself, is because we are more ambitious about the things of this life than we are about that one. What are we ambitious about?

What are we striving for? What are we putting our heads down and saying, I greatly desire this thing. See, daily impact of eternal life is it exchanges our desires.

Fourth and finally, it empowers our faithfulness. It empowers our faithfulness. Look at what it says in verse 10. For we must all.

All means all. Right? For we. Who's Paul writing to? The church. Okay? He's not writing an evangelistic letter to non-believers.

He's writing to the church. So we means the church. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. So that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

[25 : 07] This is a theme that runs throughout Scripture. Psalms declares that God is a God who recompenses man according to their deeds. Jesus says that every man will be recompensed according to his deeds. Paul here reminds us that every man will be recompensed according to his deeds.

So it is, it just runs throughout Scripture. This reality that eternal life is coming and in that coming there is this appearance for we must all appear.

This must is an emphatic must. It is something that is going to happen. We cannot change it. We cannot dictate it and we cannot, you know, we cannot make a substitution for it. We must all appear.

And this appearance by the way is an individual appearance in a corporate setting just in case you want to make yourself a little bit more uncomfortable. It is Christ before Pilate among the multitude.

It is an individual. The word judgment here is the beam of seat judgment. It is the individual called out of the multitude positioned above the multitude while the individual amongst the multitude is being examined and everything that he has done or she has done is being exposed for all to see.

[26 : 14] And all of a sudden we get real uncomfortable. This reality is is that when this individual singular, let's just say me, is before Christ, there will be a day of recompense for my deeds that I did in my body.

I am not going to be judged for your deeds which you did in your body. I am going to be judged for what I have done in my body according to what I have done whether good or bad. It is all going to be exposed. Now, just to be clear, this is not a judgment unto eternal life.

For eternal life is the free gift of God found in Christ Jesus. Right? We are eternally saved in Christ Jesus and Christ alone. No man is good enough. No man is right enough. No man can earn enough.

Your good deeds will never outweigh your bad deeds because in the sight of a holy God that doesn't matter. If you are guilty at one point you are guilty in all of it. So this is not a judgment unto eternal life. But this is a judgment Paul refers to elsewhere where all of our deeds will pass through as a fiery furnace.

Some will be consumed, some will endure and what endures we get back. This is a judgment of our deeds. This is what dictates, now stay with me if you will, this is because some of us would hear the first part and go yes, praise God, I want that.

[27 : 23] But stay with me. This is what dictates the rewards which are given unto us in eternal life. You say yes, I want a great amount of rewards. Now stay with the rest part. Those very rewards that we in turn turn around and cast back at the feet of Christ as an act of holy worship.

So this judgment is a judgment that dictates and determines what we are able to cast at the feet of our Savior and therefore it will really be the standard by which we will be able to publicly worship He who gave so much for us.

It will be that which is given to us that we get to give back to Him for all of His glory and all of His praise and all of His recognition. It is a judgment that dictates our rewards and the crown that is placed upon us which we will not hold on to but as an act of reverent holy worship we will be able to throw it back at His feet and I know I said it in quite so much redneck way that I am eight years ago the first sermon I ever preached here I said on that day I want a big honking crown to throw at Jesus' feet and in all seriousness on that day I want my worship to reflect His reverence.

I want my worship to reflect His worthiness. Whatever we throw at His feet will fall woefully short of all that He has done for us. But the reality that there is coming a day where I will stand before that King whom I long to worship and the extent of my worship will be based upon the faithfulness and goodness of my deeds at least just for a moment and it will be exposed for all to see that is an empowerment for faithfulness.

We don't scare ourselves into heaven but Paul sure used the reality of a judgment to motivate Him to live faithfully. There's coming a day.

[29 : 35] I don't use it to motivate you but I use it to motivate me. What you do with it that's between you and the Lord. But it is the empowerment that we have to live faithfully for His glory because each and every deed done in this flesh will have a moment of exposure before He who the book of Revelation says His eyes are as flaming fires.

And we see here this daily impact of eternal life. Would you pray? Lord we thank You so much. We thank You oh God for Your Word.

We thank You God for Your faithfulness to us. And we thank You that You speak to us through Your Word. So Lord we pray now during this time of invitation Lord that You would search every heart and every mind.

Lord You'd call us to walk in a greater fellowship with You. Lord if there's any here who don't know You we pray that You would call them to that place of wonderful surrender where they come before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and give their life to You.

Lord may those of us who know You truly give our life each and every day to You for Your glory and honor and Yours alone. We ask it in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

[31 : 23] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[36 : 24] Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.