2 Corinthians Ch5v1-10 - A God Vision To Live By

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[0:00] Good morning, everyone. Good to see you. Let's turn to our Bibles, to our studies in 2 Corinthians. We're going to read chapter 5, verses 1 through to 10.

2 Corinthians 5, verses 1 to 10. Let's hear God's word.
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.
Meanwhile, we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling. Because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.
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.
[1:53] 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.

Therefore, we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight.
We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.
For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due to us, for the same is done while in the body, whether good or bad.
Well, let's pray together. Our Father God, may you, by and through the power of your Holy Spirit, drive the truths of your Word deep into our hearts so that they change us not just for today, but ready and prepared for the future that is to come.
[3:44] Bless us, encourage us, and build us up as a church, we ask. And it's in Jesus' name we all pray.

Amen. Amen. Well, on Tuesday past, Catherine Connolly was inaugurated as the new President of Ireland.
In her speech, she set out her vision for our country. She promises to be a catalyst for change, a symbol of a new movement, hopes to make Ireland a place of equality and neutrality, a republic that we can be proud of.
Can you get behind that vision? Well, I hope that some of these things will be achieved. But the problem I have with that speech is, it's not that this is too big a vision, it is far too small a vision.
I'm all for hopes and dreams and a catalyst for change and a symbol for the new and making things better. But what we really and truly need today is not a vision from a president who is here but for a few years.
[5:19] But we need a vision of God, the creator, the eternal God. A vision where God guarantees and secures our future and changes and shapes our present.

In chapter 5, Paul is setting out such a vision for the church. A vision so great and big and glorious that it affects the future and changes our present.
Leading up to chapter 5, we've seen that the Christian life and ministry is one that it is hard. It's a difficult path. It's a journey which will involve weakness and suffering and death itself.
And we can easily lose heart and give up. So in chapter 5, we are given this glorious vision of God who guarantees our future and changes our present.
It's a vision that we desperately need to recover. So let's look together at this vision that comes in two parts.
[6:46] First, a God vision for the future. Look at verse 1. 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

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hands.

That's the vision for the future. A future where we will receive resurrection bodies all ready for a new creation to come.
Let me unpack that for us. Look at how our life is described in verse 1. Did you catch it at the very beginning? For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed.
Or verse 4, while we are in this tent, it's a strange way to describe us that we're like a tent, a camping tent.
Well, our lives and body are just like that. We are temporary dwellings. We're not made, the physical body isn't made to last.
[8:04] One day death will come and we'll end the tent of our physical bodies. They will be, as verse 1 says, be destroyed.

But if we are Christians, if our hope is in Christ today, well, look at the rest of verse 1. We have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.
At the end of verse 2, it is our heavenly dwelling. It's the promise of a future where this very earthly body will be changed into a glorious heavenly body.
It is nothing less than a resurrection body prepared and ready for a new creation to come, where the temporary becomes eternal, where the broken is made right, and the sinful self is made brand new.
You see, our new bodies that we are going to receive, well, we're not going to be floating about on clouds, in our white dresses, playing harps.
[9:22] no offence to any harp players. No, they will be new physical bodies without sinful corruption. It will be a new life in a physical new creation, this world, this universe made gloriously new.

A world where there will be no more decay or disease or death, no more sin or suffering or Satan. It will be gloriously new.
Not long after Kirstie and I were married, we went to Wales for a cousin's reunion. Ethan, our son, was just a few months old, and being the adventurous husband, I thought it would be good to go camping.
And with great enthusiasm, I set up our tent, ready and settled in for the night. Kirstie and me and Ethan snuggled up in the middle.
Well, then it began to rain. And when I say rain, I mean that it poured. Could you turn off the phone, please? It's very disturbing.
[10:51] We vote to find a river that was literally coming in one end of the tent and going out of the other. Ethan was roaring, crying, and of course, Kirstie was crying.

Thankfully, a kind cousin came along, saw the predicament that we were in, went over to the owner of the campsite, ordered a mobile home for us to stay in for the night, and paid for it all.
There we were, safe and warm, dry and content. Well, isn't that just a picture, a glimpse of what the risen Lord Jesus is going to do one day?
He is going to come again, and we will leave the tent of this body, in all its brokenness behind, and we will be made new for a glorious new creation where we will rest and enjoy God's provision for us forever.
Now, before we move on to the vision for the present, there are two things we need to be clear on. first of all, grace, not works.
[12:18] This vision is only made possible by God's grace, and not by our efforts. We don't get to experience this new creation with our brand new bodies by our performance.

Look again at verse one. We have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.
Our resurrection bodies, this new creation, is all God's work. It's a building from God. Just as God spoke the first creation into existence, God will speak the new creation into existence.
But more than that, look at verse five. Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God. You see, this is all God's doing, God's work.
He has saved us, He has changed us, so that we might be able to enjoy what is to come. And God prepared it all. He fashioned us for all of this by sending His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die for our sins, my sin and your sin, to raise us again from the grave.

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[13:43] All of this is God's work, all by His grace. It's like my cousin who came to the rescue when we were in that tent.

He saw our predicament. He came and He intervened. He provided us with a new home and He paid for it all. It is all wonderfully by God's grace.
But there's another thing we need to see. That right now that life is partial and not fulfilled. Because when we trust in Christ we receive all of God's good and wonderful promises.
However, all of those promises are partial. They are not yet fulfilled. So look again at verse 1. We have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.
Meanwhile, we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling. We have the promise of new resurrected bodies and a new creation.
[15:02] that's secure, that's locked in, that won't change. However, as we wait for what is to come, we are going to pass through seasons of suffering and struggles.

Just because we're Christians, it doesn't mean to say we get a pass on that. Healing this side of eternity is not guaranteed. Look at verse 4.
This is what life is like. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened because we do not wish to be unclosed, but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.
Think of it like this, that you've been invited to a wonderful grand banquet. You have the invite which guarantees your seat at the table, but there's a dress code for you to enter, formal dress for the women, black tie for the men.
You wait until those new clothes arrive so that you can go to the banquet prepared and ready. Well, verse 4 is saying if we are Christians, we are waiting for our new clothes.
[16:31] We're waiting to be clothed with our resurrection bodies so that we can take our place in the new creation. And it's all guaranteed.

Verse 5, second part of verse 5, God who has given us the spirit as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come.
I'm sure you've experienced what it is to groan in our aching bodies. Those groans, those longings that come from deep within are all evidence of God's spirit at work within us.
The spirit of God which causes us to cry out to our father as we wait for what is guaranteed.
So first we have a vision for the future, resurrection bodies for a new creation, all delivered not by our works but by God's grace which we have received now, but we await its fulfilment.
[17:51] Second, we have a God vision for the present. Look at verse 6. Therefore, so in light of what is to come, in light of the future vision to come, therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord.

So again, here's our vision for the present, for our lives today. Confident hope with a new purpose.
Let me unpack that for us. If you look carefully at verse 6, there's this little phrase which says home in the body and away from the Lord.
That describes our current status, doesn't it? We're at home in the body, in the tent of our body, in this life, in this world, and we long to be with the Lord.
Verse 8 has the same phrase, but it's reversed. He says, I would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.
[19:12] Isn't that how we feel today? That's our hope. We long to be away from this life for the life to come. But as we wait for all of that to happen, go back to verse 6, it says we are always confident.

So whatever our circumstances in life, whatever our struggles that come, we know, we are sure, we are confident that one day we will be truly at home.
This is the confidence and assurance we have. And it isn't just worked up by effort from inside of us. No, it's a confidence that is based on the historical fact of the resurrection.
Go back to chapter 4, verse 14. Do you see it there? This is where our confidence comes from.
Verse 14, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself.
[20:28] Because God raised Christ from the dead, all who are in Christ will also be raised just as Christ was raised.

Our future is secure, therefore our present is secure. Now this confidence that we have today gives us a new purpose, a new way to live.

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We see it there in verse 9. So we make it our goal to please him whether we are at home in the body or away for it.
Well how do I please the Lord? As we wake up every morning what does it mean to please him? Well go back to chapter 2 verse 14.
I think here it describes well what it means for us to please him. We'll pick it up at the middle of verse 14. God uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere.
[21:48] For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. do you see it there verse 15 we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ.

The way in which we please the Lord as we are waiting for glory is to spread the aroma of Christ wherever we go. That is we are to share this wonderful gospel story of the one who died for our sins who was raised to life securing our future as we speak of Jesus we are spreading an aroma that pleases the Lord.
That's our purpose. That's our vision for the present. When we go to college, when we go to work, when we socialise with friends, all the things that we do every day, our prayerful goal is that they would know Jesus and share in the resurrection life to come.
Now, as we live out this glorious vision, there are two things we need to keep in mind. First, face, not sight.
We live out this vision, verse seven, we live by face and not by sight. Face in this context doesn't mean saving faith like trusting in Jesus.
[23:32] It's a persevering faith. Hebrews 11 puts it like this. Now, face is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

We are waiting for something to come and that waiting, that trusting is active, not passive. We saw that last week.
If you go back to chapter 4, verse 18, what it means to live by faith and not by sight. Chapter 4, verse 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.
What we see right now, what we can feel, what we can touch, what we hold on to is all temporary. None of this is going to last.
[24:41] So, we live by trusting in God's sure and certain promises. We live each day knowing that this world is not our home. We live knowing that our groanings will one day give way to glory.

We live knowing that all our efforts to reach the lost will count. We are people who live by faith and not by sight.
But the other thing we also need to know is that it's about reward not wages. Look at verse 9 with me again.
We make it our goal to please him whether we're at home in the body or away from it for we must all appear before the judgment of seat of Christ so that each of us may receive what is due to us for the things done while in the body whether good or bad one day this is the reality the tent of my body is going to be destroyed I'm going to die and I'm going to stand before Christ and that is true of every single person in this room we will stand before Christ and verse 10 I think in particular is speaking about Christians on that day our lives are going to be assessed how did
I live how did I use my resources what did I do with my money what did I do with my time everything is going to be uncovered and laid before Christ and then when that has taken place look at the end of verse 10 we will receive what is due to us for the things done while in the body whether good or bad so what are we going to receive when we stand before Christ well if we're Christians we won't receive judgment because Christ has already been judged for us if we are not Christians we will be judged and we will fail and we will be separated from
[27:27] God for all eternity but for the Christian here in verse 10 it's not talking about condemnation but about an evaluation of how we have lived our lives for Christ so what are we going to receive for the things we did good and the things that we did bad well we will receive rewards and not wages one writer put it like this the inheritance the reward which is then kept in heaven for us is not a wage paid out to employees in proportion to what they have earned but a reward that the father in heaven grants to his children out of sheer grace it's like this as I was reflecting on this verse as I think of standing before

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Christ and my life being evaluated I don't know about you but I want to run and hide I don't want my life evaluated but when I think of God who would evaluate my life and all that I have done and him still giving me the reward of new life new resurrected body and the new creation well then I am utterly stunned and amazed at what he will do for me and it's because of this gracious undeserved reward that I am motivated today in this life to please the Lord for I want to do what will count I want all that I do to count for eternity sake and the more that
I see my father God who will give to me a reward that I do not deserve I am so utterly amazed and I can wake afresh each and every new day and say how can I live for my God so here we have a vision of the future resurrected bodies in a new creation all of God's wonderful free grace and as we consider what we are heading towards so it changes and shapes our present today a life whereby we live to please him and serve him because one day we will receive our reward not because we earn it or deserve it because we have a father who is generous and good and kind and by sheer grace will welcome us into the new creation where we will serve him and enjoy him forever this is a vision that we can live by a vision that shapes the future and secures our future and gives us hope and reason to live tomorrow let's pray our father god we confess that our vision for our lives is so often so small it is not big enough help us that our lives would be changed and shaped by the vision we have just seen in your word a vision that shapes our future and changes our present father by the power of your holy spirit help us to keep our eyes fixed on this vision help us to encourage one another to stick to it and to walk by it knowing that this world we live in is only preparation for a glorious new home to come thank you father god in jesus name amen well we're going to sing in response a well known hymn in christ

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