

2 Corinthians 5:1-5  
The Christian Life in a Human Body

**Introduction:** There have 2 extremes within Christianity throughout the centuries concerning the body. On the one hand, the body has been viewed as evil and thus abused. On the other hand, the body has been viewed as the focal point of highest pleasure and thus abused.

Another question within Christianity is, what happens when a believer dies? Three primary views: (1) a bodiless state; (2) a resurrection body; or (3) an intermediate body.

This section continues the thoughts begun in 4:16-18 and will extend to 5:10.

**1) Confidence regarding the present body—5:1-4** (cf. Rom. 8:18-24)

- a) **The contrast**—5:1 <sup>1</sup> *For [gar]* (cf. 4:16-18) *we know* (common knowledge among Christians) *that ...*
  - i) **Present, temporary** residence on earth until death—5:1a *if* [3<sup>rd</sup> class condition] ...
    - (1) **Its location:** *the earthly tent which is our house*
    - (2) **Its destruction:** *is torn down* (dismantled like a tent),
      - (a) We are all vulnerable to the instabilities of life, including death and decay. Cf. 2 Cor. 4:16; 2 Pet. 1:13-14
      - (b) See the scars on Paul's body (cf. Gal. 6:17; 2 Cor. 11:23-27)
      - (c) The human mortality rate remains steady at 100%.
  - ii) **Future, eternal** residence in heaven—5:1b (then) *we have a building ...*
    - (1) Its **identity**?:
      - (a) The resurrected, glorified body?—parallel to body in 1a
      - (b) Heaven? Or a specific place in heaven?
    - (2) Its **source:** *from God,*
    - (3) Its **construction:** *a house not made with hands [acheiropoiotos],*
    - (4) Its **duration:** *eternal*
    - (5) Its **location:** *in the heavens.*
    - (6) This seems to be referring to the glorified body given to all believers. There is no homelessness for the Christian at death.
- b) **The groaning**—5:2-3
  - i) <sup>2</sup> *For [gar]* *indeed in this we groan* [pres. act. ind.], (cf. Rom. 8:23)
    - (1) Life in this tent is difficult, uncomfortable, and unpleasant at times. Experiencing frustrating limitations and disabilities.
    - (2) The certainty of hope does not bring Paul rest, but unrest. (Mark Seifrid)
    - (3) The groaning is rooted, not in hopeless dejection, but joyful anticipation.
  - ii) *longing [epipotheo] to be clothed with [ependuomai] our dwelling from heaven,*
    - (1) Cf. Phil. 1:21-23

- iii) **If ...:** <sup>3</sup> *inasmuch* [1<sup>st</sup> class condition] *as we, having put it on* [**enduo**],
- iv) **Then ...:** (we) *will not be found naked*.
- v) The believer will never be found in a bodiless state.

c) **The burden—5:4**

- i) <sup>4</sup> **For** [**gar**] *indeed while we are in this tent, we groan* [pres. act. ind.],
  - (1) Life in this tent is difficult at times.
- ii) *being burdened* [pres. pass. ptc.],
  - (1) **Negative:** *because we do not want* [**thelo**] *to be unclothed* [**ekduo**] (i.e. die)
    - (a) Paul's longing here is not for death (as in Greek views of the body as a tomb, which made even suicide acceptable if life became too difficult) but for the resurrection, when he will receive a new body. (Craig Keener)
  - (2) **Positive:** *but to be clothed* [**ependuomai**] (i.e. eternal spiritual body), *so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by* (immortal) *life*.
    - (a) An echo of Is. 25:8 and 1 Cor. 15:54.

2) **Confidence regarding the future—5:5**

- a) The **purpose:** <sup>5</sup> *Now He who prepared* [**katergazomai**] *us for this very purpose* (receiving an immortal body) *is God*,
- b) The **pledge:** *who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge* [**arrabon**]
- c) Paul's hope rests not only upon the objective knowledge that it is God who is preparing him for a glorious future but also upon the subjective experience of the Spirit which he enjoys. (Colin Kruse)

3) **Things we need to remember:**

- a) An intermediate body is suggested in 1 Sam. 28:14 (Samuel); Luke 16:19-31 (rich man and Lazarus); Matt. 17:3 (Moses and Elijah); and Rev. 6:9-11 (Tribulation martyrs).
- b) No matter our earthly body is dismantled (by time, illness, or violence), our guaranteed hope is that we will stand in the presence of the Son.
  - i) The groanings in this life are real, and to be expected. They are, however, not the end. Don't deny their reality, but don't focus on them exclusively.
  - ii) The dwelling from heaven for which he groans is not some immaterial existence of the soul but the immortal life of the resurrection. ... The hope of the resurrection is no narcotic that leaves its possessors passive, listless, and dormant. On the contrary, it makes them restless pilgrims. (Mark Seifrid)
- iii)

2 Corinthians 5:6-10  
Pleasing to the Lord

**Introduction:**

**1) Internal struggle of living in a human body—5:6-8**

**a) How can Paul respond this way?—5:6-7**

i) <sup>6</sup> **Therefore** [*oun*] ...

(1) Despite all the opposition, accusations, and physical suffering, Paul knows he has the presence of the Spirit as God's pledge to him of a physical resurrection. (cf. 5:5)

ii) **Certainty:** *being always of good courage* [pres. act. ptc. *tharreo*],

(1) This is the flip side of not losing heart (cf. 4:1, 16).

(2) "Confidence" for the apostle is not *being* confident but *having* confidence. Confidence is given to him from without, not mustered from within. (Mark Seifrid)

iii) **Awareness:** *and knowing* [pf. act. ptc. *oida*] *that ...*

(1) *while we are at home* [pres. act. ptc. *endemeo*] (take up residence) *in the body*

(a) In an earthly tent gradually wasting away.

(2) *we are absent* [pres. act. ind. *ekdemeo*] *from the Lord—*

(a) We are in exile, away from home.

iv) <sup>7</sup> **for** [*gar*] *we walk* [pres. act. ind. *peripateo*]

(1) **Positively:** *by* (in the realm of) *faith*,

(a) This is not command or a goal, but a statement of fact.

(b) We live in the realm of faith, not how things appear.

(2) **Negatively:** *not by* (in the realm of) *sight/appearance—*

(a) Appearances can be, and often are, deceiving.

(b) We don't need, as Israel had, a pillar of cloud or fire to guide us. It didn't keep them from spiritual adultery; neither would it help us.

**b) What is Paul's response?—5:8**

i) **Courageous certainty:** <sup>8</sup> *we are of good courage* [pres. act. ind. *tharreo*]

ii) **Pleasurable approval:** *and prefer* [pres. act. ind. *eudokeo*] *rather*

(1) *to be absent* [aor. act. inf. *ekdemeo*] *from the body*

(2) *and to be at home* [aor. act. inf. *endemeo*] (take up residence) *with the Lord.*

(a) Cf. Ps. 72:25; Phil. 1:23; 1 Thess. 4:13-18

**2) Godward ambition and the Judgment Seat of Christ—5:9-10**

**a) The ambition:** <sup>9</sup> *Therefore* [*dio*] *we also have as our ambition* [*philotimeomai*], *... to be pleasing/satisfying* [*euarestos*] *to Him.*

i) *whether at home* [pres. act. ptc. *endemeo*]

ii) *or absent* [pres. act. ptc. *ekdemeo*],

- b) **The reason for this ambition:** <sup>10</sup> For [*gar*] ...
- i) **The necessity:** *we must* [pres. act. ind. *dei*] *all*  
(1) No Christians are exempt from this.
- ii) **The presentation:** *appear* [aor. pass. inf. *phaneroo*] *before the judgment seat* [*bema*] *of Christ*, (cf. Rom. 14:10)  
(1) Jesus had been to Pilate's Bema Seat in Matt. 27:19 and John 19:13.  
Paul had been to the Corinthian Bema in Acts 18:12-17 and again at the Caesarean Bema in Acts 25:1-22.  
(2) This is not voluntary or a mere suggestion.
- iii) **The purpose:** *so that* [*hina*] *each one may be recompensed for his deeds* [aor. mid. sub. *komizo*] *in the body, according to what he has done/accomplished* [*prasso*], *whether good/beneficial* [*agathos*] *or bad/worthless, unhelpful* [*phaulos*].  
(1) The evaluation will be accurate because the Judge has perfect knowledge and wisdom.

**3) Things we need to remember:**

- a) **To walk by sight** would be to grasp for all the health and wealth we possibly can here and now, believing this life to be our best shot at happiness. It is a life of worry. (Dane Ortlund)
- b) **To walk by faith** is to live in light of ultimate rather than immediate realities, to be obedient to God's commands despite the hardships that obedience produces. (David Lowry)
- c) **To please Christ:** But, though subject to numerous ills, the body is important. We cannot blame our failures and sins on it because of its infirmities. We are to please Christ by *using these bodies* in His service. ... While there is conscious life, no matter how the body is injured and worn, there are ways of using it that please Christ. (Jay Adams)

2 Cor. 5:11-15  
No Longer Live for Ourselves

**Introduction:** Selflessness is a foreign concept for our culture, including churches.

**1) Attempts at persuasion—5:11**

- a) **Persuasion:** <sup>11</sup> *So then [oun], ... we persuade [pres. act. ind. peitho] men,*
  - i) How? *knowing the fear of the Lord,*
    - (1) To fear/be in awe of Christ is to express loyalty to Him and faithfulness to His Word. Those who fear Christ trust in Him and obey His commands. They desire to have their works evaluated positively by Christ at the Bema Seat.
  - ii) Persuading people:
    - (1) Some see this as attempts at evangelism.
    - (2) Some see this as attempts to convince others of Paul's own integrity.
- b) **Godward disclosure:** *but [de] we have been made manifest [pf. pass. ind. phaneroo] to God;*
  - i) Paul's character and motives were permanently exposed to and perfectly known by God. (Murray Harris)
- c) **Manward disclosure:** *and [de] I hope that we have been made manifest [pf. pass. inf. phaneroo] also in your consciences.*
  - i) Paul was eagerly desirous that the Corinthians would all come to share the divine assessment of his person and ministry and motives. (Murray Harris)
  - ii) Rather than appealing to the Corinthians for approval, however, he appeals to them to recognize the spiritual realities of his ministry, that he has been called by God and that they are called to the true God and the true gospel through Paul's ministry. (George Guthrie)

**2) Explanation of ministry—5:12**

- a) **Don't misunderstand:** <sup>12</sup> *We are not again commending [sunistemi] ourselves to you*
  - i) Self-commendation is often sinful but not always
    - (1) Cf. Prov. 25:27; 27:2
  - ii) Paul's 9 uses of sunistemi in 2 Corinthians
    - (1) Viewed negatively: 5:12; 10:12, 18a
    - (2) Viewed neutral: 3:1
    - (3) Viewed positively: 4:2; 6:4; 7:11; 10:18b; 12:11
- b) **Righteous boasting:** *but [alla] are giving you an opportunity [aphorme] to boast [kauchema] of us,*
  - i) Aphorme refers to a strategic base of military operations.
- c) **Sinful boasting:** *so that [hina] you will have an answer for those who boast [kauchaomai] (have an inflated view of themselves) ...*
  - i) **Positive, externals:** *in appearance* (externals)

- (1) Cf. 10:1, 7
  - (2) Cf. Jesus' words in John 7:24
  - ii) **Negative, internals:** *and not in heart* (internals).
    - (1) Cf. 1 Sam. 16:7
    - (2) Paul was content to take his stand on what was “in the heart”—transparency before God and people and the testimony of his own conscience. (Murray Harris)
  - iii) Remember that Paul will later boast about his own weaknesses. (cf. 12:9-10)
  - iv) Paul has given the Corinthians ample ammunition to defend Paul. “What was this basis for pride in him that Paul was supplying to his converts at Corinth? It was their firsthand knowledge of his life and ministry, embedded in their consciousness and consciences (v. 11b)—knowledge of his missionary and pastoral endeavor and accomplishments, and memory of his apostolic suffering for the cause of Christ.” (Murray Harris)
- 3) Competing assumptions regarding Paul—5:13**
- a) **Paul is irrational, insane:** <sup>13</sup> *For [gar] if [1<sup>st</sup> class condition] we are out of our mind [existemi], it is for God,* (cf. Mark 3:21; Acts 26:24-29)
    - i) Paul's ultimate focus was vertical.
  - b) **Paul is very rational, sane:** *or if [1<sup>st</sup> class condition] we are of right mind [sophroneo], it is for you.*
    - i) Paul's secondary focus was horizontal
  - c) Either way, Paul is selfless.
- 4) Substitution—5:14-15**
- a) **Motivation:** <sup>14</sup> *For [gar] the love of (the) Christ controls [sunecho] us,*
    - i) Love
      - (1) Objective genitive?: Love from Paul for Christ
      - (2) Subjective genitive?: Love from Christ for Paul
        - (a) The immediate context speaks of Christ's selfless death.
        - (b) Wherever the word “love” is found in the NT in this grammatical construction, it is always focused on the person doing the loving, not the recipient of that love. (George Guthrie)
    - ii) Christ's self-sacrificing love restrains Paul from being self-oriented. Before salvation, Paul was controlled by zeal. (cf. Phil. 3:6)
    - iii) Christ's love for his people is not one competing motivation among others but is the master motivation, the transcendent, dominating, all-determining engine for Christian life and ministry. (Dane Ortlund)
  - b) **Conclusion:** *having concluded [krino] this,*
    - i) This is a rational, not an irrational or emotional, decision to turn from the self-oriented mindset inherited from Adam.
  - c) **Substitution:**
    - i) *that one died for/in place of [huper] all, therefore (the) all died.*

- (1) In addition to dying in Adam in the garden, our spiritual deadness is also undeniably recognized at the cross. In a sense, we are doubly dead.
- ii) <sup>15</sup> *And He died for/in place of [huper] all,*
- (1) **Universal** application of Christ's death: 1 Tim. 2:6; 4:10; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2
- (2) **Particular** application of Christ's death:
- d) **Intention:** *so that [hina] ...*
- i) **Negative:** *they who live* (a sub-group of the all who died) *would no longer live for themselves,*
- (1) While all persons died, in one sense, when the Man who represented them died, not all were raised to new life when he rose. (Murray Harris)
- (2) We have lived a self-oriented life long enough. We live in a society given to self-promotion, self-direction, self-fulfillment, self-advantageous, self-indulgence, and self-protection.
- (a) The false teachers of Corinth practice a worldly form of self-aggrandizement and one-upmanship politics in the church, seeking to win advantage over Paul in terms of church leadership. In no uncertain terms Paul wishes to show that such a posture runs counter to the very essence of what it means to belong to Christ. (George Guthrie)
- (3) Christ's work not only accomplishes something for the individual but in the individual.
- (4) David Garland writes: What seemed to the casual observer to have been an ignominious and powerless death on a cross actually exerts enormous power for good on those who submit to it.
- ii) **Positive:** *but [alla] for Him who died and rose/was raised again on their behalf/in place of them [huper].*
- (1) Remember, this is not about paying Jesus back for what He did for us. As has been said, gifts are given to be received, not to be repaid.
- iii) Replacing the slavery to self that is the hallmark of the unregenerate state should be an exclusive devotion to the crucified and resurrected Messiah. The intended result of the death of Christ was the Christian's renunciation of self-seeking and self-pleasing and the pursuit of a Christ-centered life filled with action for the benefit of others, as was Christ's life. (Murray Harris)

## 5) Things to remember:

- a) When humans make judgments on the basis of appearances and normal expectations, they are likely to make false judgments. The visible realm is incomplete, illusive, and subject to the ravages of decay. (David Garland)
- b) The death of Christ is more than a fact to be believed; it demands a lifestyle that needs to be lived. (David Woodall)

- c) The outcome of Christian self-denial is a Christ-centered life filled with concern for others. (Murray Harris)



2 Corinthians 5:16-19  
The Effective Work of the Son and the Father

**Introduction:**

**1) Knowledge/perspective—5:16** <sup>16</sup> *Therefore [hoste] ...*

- “Therefore” is in light of 5:14-15
- Genuine salvation gives us a new perspective of Christ and others. New criteria by which to evaluate Jesus and others.
- a) The repudiation of his previous negative, superficial, inaccurate, misguided human perspective based on appearances. (cf. 5:12)
  - i) **Negative:** *from now on we recognize/acknowledge [oida] no one according to the flesh;*
  - ii) **Positive:** *even though/if [1<sup>st</sup> class condition] we have known [ginosko] Christ according to the flesh,*
    - (1) Jesus died and rose again in April of AD 33. Paul was converted in the summer of AD 35.
    - (2) Today people view Jesus as an immigrant, a social justice warrior, a revolutionary to help the oppressed, a misguided teacher, a charismatic healer, a recycled prophet, a false messiah, etc.
  - iii) Paul, before his conversion, like many of his fellow Jews, evaluated Christ “from a worldly perspective” and dismissed claims that he was the Messiah because he regarded it as unthinkable that God’s Messiah could be crucified as a criminal. (Colin Kruse)
  - iv) Knowledge about Jesus is not the same as believing in Jesus. Mere information about Jesus cannot transform a person from self-centeredness to selflessness. (David Lowery)
- b) The adoption of his current Godward perspective: *yet [alla] now we know [ginosko] Him in this way no longer.*
  - i) Cf. Rom. 14:8-12

**2) What GOD has done—5:17**

- a) <sup>17</sup> *Therefore ...—5:17*
  - i) “Therefore” is the second consequence of 5:14-15.
- b) **All believers are part of a new creation:** *if [1<sup>st</sup> class condition] anyone is in Christ, (he is) a new creation; (lit. if anyone in Christ, a new creation)*
  - i) Cf. Gal. 6:15
- c) **What does the new creation look like, both individually and corporately?**
  - i) **Negative:** *the old things [archaios/archaic] passed away;*
  - ii) **Positive:** *behold, new things have come [pf. act. ind.] (and remain).*
- d) We see this objectively (in the Word) and subjectively (in our own lives).

**3) What GOD THE FATHER has done—5:18-19**

- a) **God initiates and accomplishes:** <sup>18</sup> *Now all these things (dramatic changes) are from God,—5:18*
- i) **COMPLETE reconciliation** (transformation of relationship): *who reconciled [katallasso] us to Himself through Christ*
- (1) Paul is not speaking here of the overcoming of God's enmity against humanity, but that of the fallen humanity against God.
- (2) The shift to the reconciliation metaphor takes what God has done through Christ a step further. The judge enters into a personal relationship with the accused. This is necessary because the judge is the one who has been sinned against and is the focus of the personal hostility. God does not simply make a bookkeeping alteration by dropping the charges against us. God gives himself to us in friendship. Because of our extreme hostility toward God, this investment is accomplished at unspeakable cost. (David Garland)
- (3) Whereas for justification the sphere is the courtroom, for sanctification the temple, for redemption the slave market, and for adoption the family, the sphere of reconciliation is that of *friendship*. (Dane Ortlund)
- ii) **INCOMPLETE reconciliation:** *and gave [didomi] us the ministry of (the) reconciliation [katallage],*
- b) **God forgives through Christ and communicates through people—5:19**
- i) **Forgiveness through Christ:** <sup>19</sup> *namely, that God was in Christ (His entire earthly life) reconciling [katallasso] the world (all who believe, Jew or Gentile) to Himself,*
- (1) *not counting [logizomai] their transgressions [paraptoma] (overstepping the boundary) against them,*
- ii) **Proclamation through Paul and his ministry team:** *and He has committed [tithemi] to us the word of (the) reconciliation [katallage].*

#### 4) **Things to remember:**

- a) Adam's sin broke humanity's perfect relationship with God and made humanity enemies with God (Rm 5:10). For Paul, humanity was so sinful that human beings could not reconcile themselves to God. But God himself took the initiative in history to reconcile humanity through the death of Christ on the cross. This does not mean, however, that every human is automatically reconciled. The message must be proclaimed and received (Rm 5:11) by faith in Christ (Rm 5:1–2). (David Woodall, MBC)
- b) God did not deputize Paul to make people feel good about themselves and their relationship to God but to effect a real peace. This task means that he must always point to something beyond himself, not to himself, to what God has done in Christ, not what he is doing for Christ. (David Garland)

2 Corinthians 5:20-21  
Ambassadors for Christ

**Introduction:**

**1) What we are—5:20** (16 Greek words, 24 English)

- a) **Faithful REPRESENTATIVES of God's authority:** <sup>20</sup> *So then [oun], we are ambassadors [presbeuo] for [huper] Christ,*
  - i) The status of ambassador (similar to an apostle) is not dependent on the audience to whom Paul is sent but on Christ who had sent Paul. (Murray Harris)
  - ii) To reject the representative was to reject the one who sent him. To ignore Paul would be to ignore the Christ on whose behalf he spoke. (Paul Barnett)
- b) **Faithful COMMUNICATORS of God's message:** *as God is pleading [pres. act. ptc. parakaleo] through [dia] us.*
  - i) God communicates His work to the world through the work of His ambassador. (Mark Seifrid)
  - ii) Paul is authorized by the offended God to announce to the hostile world God's terms for peace.
  - iii) Cf. 1 Thess. 2:13

**2) What we do at times with Christians—5:20b**

- a) **Urgent need:** *We beg you [you is not in the Greek text] [deomai] (Corinthian believers?) on behalf of [huper] Christ,*
  - i) His hands are not on his hips, exasperated (like a frustrated mother); his hands are wide open, beseeching. (Dane Ortlund)
- b) **Command:** *be reconciled [aor. pass. impv. katallasso] to (the) God (the Father by God the Father).*
  - i) This assumes a state of hostility exists between humanity and God.
  - ii) Four elements of reconciliation: (David Garland)
    - (1) Reconciliation obliges us to come to terms with the alienation and our responsibility for it. We must recognize our culpability for the ruptured relationship.
    - (2) The key phrase in the call to be reconciled is "to God." Humans may attempt to reconcile with one another, but if they are not also reconciled to God there will be no real reconciliation. Reconciliation obliges us to reorder our lives around God. Our changed orientation, when we no longer live to ourselves, will spill over into all our relationships with others. Continuing to harbor enmity toward others belies any claim to be reconciled to God.
    - (3) Reconciliation requires that we jettison all worldly criteria for evaluating others. We must look at others from God's vantage point.
    - (4) Those who are reconciled to God are a reconciling force.

**3) What did God do?—5:21 (15 Greek words, 24 English)**

- Paul echoes the truths of Is. 53:9-11.
- a) **What?** <sup>21</sup> *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf,*
  - i) **The sovereignty of the Father:** <sup>21</sup> *He (the Father) made [aor. act. ind. poieo] Him (Christ)*
    - (1) Christ is not an unwilling or surprised participant. He willingly came to do the Father's will. (cf. John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29)
  - ii) **The historic sinless life of Christ:** *who knew no [aor. act. ptc. ginosko] sin [hamartia]*
    - (1) Cf. Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; 3:18; 1 John 3:5
  - iii) **The representative, sin-laden death of Christ:** *to be [no verb in Greek] sin [hamartia] on our behalf [huper]*
    - (1) God treated Christ as "sin," aligning him so totally with sin and its dire consequences that from God's viewpoint he became indistinguishable from sin itself. (Murray Harris)
    - (2) Jesus, as sin personified, suffered the consequences our sin deserved, alienation from God and the object of God's wrath.
- b) **Why?** *so that [hina] we might become [aor. mid. subj. ginomai] the righteousness [dikaiosune] of God (the Father) in [en] Him (Christ).*
  - i) Only those who come to the Father through the Son can have a righteous standing before the Father.

**4) Things to remember:**

- a) Many others have stated: As Christ was not a sinner, but was treated as if He were, so believers who have not yet been made righteous (until glorification) are treated as if they were righteous.
- b) Murray Harris wrote: We should never overlook the wonder and mystery of the fact that it was the all-holy God himself who caused Christ, his spotless Son, to become sin and therefore the object of his wrath.
- c) God took it upon himself to reconcile us to him. He did this not by pulling in a neutral third party to pay our debt but by sending his own beloved Son. He exhausted his righteous divine wrath on that Son in his death on the cross. (Dane Ortlund)