

January 5, 2020

II Corin 4: 7-5:5, “Heaven is around the corner”

READING

John 13:31-14:7

PRAY

II Corinthians 4:7-5:5

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. <sup>8</sup>We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; <sup>9</sup>persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; <sup>10</sup>always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. <sup>11</sup>For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. <sup>12</sup>So death is at work in us, but life in you.

<sup>13</sup>Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, “I believed, and so I spoke,” we also believe, and so we also speak, <sup>14</sup>knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. <sup>15</sup>For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

<sup>16</sup>So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup>For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup>as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

### **Our Heavenly Dwelling**

**5** For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. <sup>2</sup>For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup>if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. <sup>4</sup>For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup>He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. <sup>1</sup>

---

1 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (2 Co 4:7–5:5). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Today is our last sermon in our advent season..... over the last several weeks, we have spent most our time looking at the genealogy of Christ as we have been celebrating the first Advent or arrival of Christ..... and understanding the entrance of God into the world he created in order to redeem or save people from sin is something we should remember, we should reflect on, and we should celebrate..... and it gave those who were waiting for the Messiah great hope..... and our Christmas season is a reminder of that hope!

today, we are going to take the time to reflect on another Advent.....Christ's next arrival; his 2nd coming; or his return... And what I want you to see as we anticipate his coming is that the announcement of Jesus coming back to bring his people to the place he is preparing for them is as much of a comfort for us, in our day, as the first advent was for God's people in their day....

The 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ is the culmination of his coming in to the world to save his people from sin and to restore the alienation man has had with God since the garden of Eden, so that we are with Him forever and ever and ever.....and it is a tremendous comfort and gives tremendous hope....that this life is not all there is..... there is a heaven.... There is an after life..... there is eternity waiting for those who are His.....

We are going to begin in John 13, which was read at the beginning of the service..... then move over to the passage I read from I II Corinthians 4.... so you can begin by opening up to John 13....

Obviously, there is far more in these passages than we can cover in depth.....since we are jumping into both portions of Scripture in the middle of a greater context, it really is hard to know where to start the reading and where to end it.....because there is a flow of thought that we are interrupting.....

But, for our purposes this morning, I want us to focus our attention on the simple fact that Jesus has prepared a place for us....and the day will come when we are in his presence forever..... these are the two main thoughts that I want us to see in these two portions of Scripture,

And, what I want you to see from John 13 and 14 in particular is that in the greater context the disciples are still clearly confused about so much.....This is the upper room discourse on the night Jesus will be betrayed..... in chapter 13, he just finished setting the disciples an example of serving one another by washing their feet..... He announced that there was a betrayer among them and he dismissed Judas to go and do what he had planned on doing....

And, then he tells them in verse 33 of chapter 13, "Where I am going, you cannot come." This is a direct reference to his pending death..... and even though he has told them over and over and over that soon the Jews would deliver him up to the Gentiles, and he would be beaten,

scourged and eventually crucified, they still did not understand it..... this is why Peter asks, "Where are you going?" in verse 36, and Jesus states it again, "where I am going, you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." This could be a statement telling Peter that he will follow him in martyrdom..... but ultimately Peter, all the disciples, and you and I will follow Jesus into heaven.....

What you can't miss from this section is that Jesus saying he was leaving and they could not follow Him caused great sorrow and anxiety.....they knew one thing..... Jesus has been with them for 3 years.....and He is still with them now..... and Jesus is telling them that he is going somewhere and they cannot go with him...and they clearly had a sense that from their point of view this seemed fairly permanent....

When Jesus encourages them in John 14:1 to not let their hearts be troubled.... he is saying that because they are troubled..... Troubled is not a word we use very often to describe or define an emotional state..... the word actually means "great mental distress." It can mean disturbed, terrified, horrified..... There are at least 3 times in the life of Christ that this word was used to describe what he was experiencing..... Remember, Jesus was fully human and fully divine, he had two inseparable natures.....and, in his humanity, he experienced all the emotions that you and I experience.....

All 3 uses of this word in the life of Christ are in John 11, 12, and 13.....Jesus was in great mental distress when he contemplated his pending death, knowing the he would be dying for sin..... .....He was equally troubled when he was betrayed by Judas ..... and he also was in mental anguish when he saw the weeping of Mary at the grave of his friend and her brother Lazarus..... Obviously, these were times of great inner pain and turmoil describing deep and great sorrow of soul.....

So, when Jesus, in John 14 tells the disciples to not let their hearts be troubled, it is because they were currently in great mental distress, or deep anguish over the fact that they knew Jesus was leaving them..... the verb form of "Do not let" means to stop something that is already in progress....

notice Jesus encouragement in order for them to not be troubled..... in order for them not to be in such anguish of soul.....

It is so simple, yet so profound..... there is a command and a promise..... the command is in verse 1, to believe in God and believe in Jesus.....believe that Jesus is the only way to the Father..... and the promise is in verse 3, "I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also." And, since we know that Christ ascended to the Father, in essence, what he is saying that is designed to encourage them..... is that "I am the only way to the Father, and I am coming back and I will take you to him....."

Jesus is saying, "Don't be troubled, don't be in anguish..... Believe in God, and believe that I am the only access to him or the only way to him..... believe that no one comes to the Father except through me.....and believe my promise that I will take you to Him...."

And, it is here where we get a small glimpse of heaven, of the after life, of where Jesus will take us..... Jesus describes heaven as a house with rooms..... verse 2, "In my Father's house are many rooms." If you are familiar with the King James, it mistranslates rooms here as mansions. The word means abode, room, or quarters.....and it gives no indication of being overly large or luxurious.....

the emphasis is not on the accommodations, the emphasis is that you are being brought to live in God's house or heaven with Christ, with the Father, with the Triune God...., and apparently you will not be alone there because there are many rooms.... We know from the Abrahamic covenant that the promise was that His spiritual descendants would be innumerable, more than the sand that is on the seashore.....

The fact that Jesus is preparing rooms for His people does not mean that he is in heaven now wearing a construction hat ordering angels around, trying to finish the dry wall, touch up the paint and that hasn't been completed..... heaven is not under construction..... His preparation for us in heaven was through His death, burial and resurrection....and the moment he cried, "It is finished" and the curtain in the temple or God's earthly house was torn in two, at that moment, the way was prepared for us to have access to the Father through the precious blood of Jesus the Son..... the Father's house is ready.....

Jesus is saying, "I am coming back for you, and through me, you will have permanent, eternal, constant access to the God who created you..... you will abide with him, you will live in his house. He has a room for you....." Do you hear how personal this is?

We know the 2nd coming of Christ is going to be public and physical..... or we can use the word visible..... It will be in direct contrast to his first advent, when he was born in a stable and laid in a manger in absolute obscurity and almost invisible except for Mary, Joseph and a few shepherds.....unlike his first arrival, his return will be like lightening going from east to west when he comes in the glory of His father with the Holy angels according to Mark 8.....

In his first advent, a choir of angels sang glory to God in the highest to a group of lowly shepherds....., at his return "the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. <sup>2</sup>" It will be visible..... it will be loud..... it will be glorious..... and it will be triumphant.....

---

<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (1 Th 4:16). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

But, don't miss the personal aspect and promise of the 2nd advent in what I just read from in John 14 verse 3... "I will come again and take **you** to myself that where I am, there **you** may be also." What a tremendous promise that is..... we know it will be public, we know it will be visible..... we know it will be loud..... but, here, it is so personal.....he is speaking to the disciples, but it applies to all of us as believers, "I will take **you** to myself.... I will take **you** where I am..... I will bring **you** with me to heaven, to my heavenly Father...."

these are some of the most profound words of reconciliation in all of Scripture.....

This is the promise of the return of Christ..... this is the promise of the 2nd Advent..... this is the promise that is or was designed take away the most extreme mental anguish or distress of heart that a person can go through.....The disciples were experiencing grave difficulty and in essence, Jesus is saying, "Everything is going to be okay because I am going to come back and bring you to be with me, I am going to bring you to my father, where there is a place for you a room for you.....for all eternity....." so be of good courage....

but what about the upcoming persecutions? What about the difficulties we face, living in a sin cursed world? What about problems that arise in relationships, families, work environments? What about the physical difficulties we encounter? What about the heartache of death, illness, pain, and sufferings? Jesus is not giving us a picture that life will be easy, that we can have our best life now, or the promise of health, wealth, and prosperity on earth..... but he is saying...

One day, you will be with me permanently.....

one day, you will be in heaven forever

One day, you will be in the presence of God

One day, you will have an eternal home

One day, you will live and never die,

One day you will be in a place where there is constant moment by moment fellowship with the Father, Son, and the Spirit.....

One day, Jesus will come back and take you to heaven personally.....

and these truths will give you the grace to go through even the most difficult circumstances in this life....

How often do you think of the return of Christ? How often do you think of eternity? Does the return of Christ and being with the Father where there is no more sin, no more pain, no more

tears, and no more strife.... does that comfort your troubled soul? It was meant to comfort the troubled souls of the disciples.....

I think this is what Paul was saying in II Corinthians 4, go ahead and turn there, I think this is what Paul was getting at when he was writing to the Corinthians about some of the things they were experiencing as he attempts to show them that eternity, Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> advent is near for all of us.....

We already read it, but notice verse 14 again.....

<sup>14</sup> knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence."

The confidence that we have that one day we will be with him is directly related to the confidence we have in the resurrection of Christ. His resurrection from the dead was the first fruits of those in the future, and since He was raised, we will be too. And we will forever be in his presence.....Our hope is anchored in the fact that Jesus is alive.....

### **jump down to verse 16**

<sup>16</sup> So we do not lose heart. **(sounds like Jesus talking to the disciples saying, "do not let your heart be troubled," doesn't it?)** Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup> as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

This is an amazing portion of Scripture that really shows the contrast between the here and now and the then and there..... between earth and heaven.... Between what we experience with our own eyes, body, and senses; and what we what we can't see, but we know is true by faith.....Paul encourages us not to lose heart in this life because, soon we will be in the presence of God.....

So, as we look more carefully at verses 16 through 18, first of all, we are not to lose heart when our bodies are decaying.... 2ndly, do not lose heart, even when we face afflictions, and thirdly, do not lose heart, even when things do not make sense...

Notice, first, what he says about our outer shell or our bodies again.... He makes no bones about the fact that our bodies are wasting away, but our inner self or our regenerated soul's are being renewed day by day..... I mean, look at us..... especially those of us who are beyond 40 or so..... It is true that "the old gray mare, she ain't what she used to be."

We live in a culture that is constantly looking for the fountain of youth.....and there are people from time to time that seem to defy aging..... In sports, there is Tom Brady, Cal Ripken, Nolan Ryan, and Robert Parish.....In hockey, it is quite a feat to play in 1500 games, and Steve Yzerman is one of 15 who have accomplished this..... but eventually, they all retire..... and when you see them 20 years later doing TV commercials Icy hot or Ben Gay, it is a bit sad.....

Mark Spitz a 7 time gold medal winner in swimming is a gray haired, a bit pudgy, spokesperson for a device that allows you to have a mobile EKG

People are doing everything they can to stay young and fight the very laws of nature and of the curse of sin that was placed upon us in the garden..... death was one of the consequences of Adam's sin, and from the time we are born until we breathe our last breath, we are on a trajectory to the grave.....

And, some will take hormones to stay young..... .. some have surgery to try to look young..... and no matter what you try, the fact is, our bodies are only on this planet for a limited time.... We live in a country that allow us better health,, and more comfort than most.....but the grave is still calling.....

Our bodies or our outer shell is wasting away..... it means to gradually become incapacitated..... it means to decompose.....

This became so real to me a few years ago, when I was putting my Christmas tree away..... I keep it in a box on the top shelf of some storage shelves, and for the first time, I did not have the strength to lift it over my head and push it up where it goes.... I have had a couple of shoulder injuries from sports and accidents and... I had to ask my daughter in law to come in the garage and help me to push the tree up where it belongs..... embarrassing....

And what Paul saying is, "do not lose heart that your body is falling apart through illness, cancer, or just because of aging....."

I hope that your physical body is not your ultimate hope....., "As in Adam, all die..."

Rather, if you are a Christian believer, it is your inner self or your spirit that is renewed day by day.... It is your spirit that lives forever.... It is your spirit that continues to grow.....no matter what you are experiencing in your body, if you are walking with Christ, seeking Him, obeying Him, then your Spirit is not wasting away..... it is growing in grace, it is being renewed, it is being strengthened.

What a contrast between our decaying, decomposing body, and the Spirit that resides in us.....While the world is looking for life from a body that is wasting away..... we have life from the Spirit of God that dwells in us....

Jesus stated in John 6:63, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."<sup>3</sup>

Even with all the physical ailments we have, even when we are feeble, frail, and fractured, we can keep growing, keep being renewed, keep conforming into the image of Christ, until we take our last breath.....and, Paul is encouraging us to not lose heart..... because there is a better place around the corner....He tells us in I Corinthians 15 that our mortal bodies, will one day have a body that is immortal.....when we are resurrected from the dead.....

Beloved, I want to say this with the utmost sensitivity..... this passage is not here as a way for you and I to use it on someone who just received a cancer diagnosis.....It is an instruction to the entire body of Christ to help us with perspective.....For most of us, it takes a while to gain perspective....it takes time to work it through.....

Paul is not commanding us to jump up and down in triumphilistic praise over the difficulties we face in this life..... "I have been diagnosed with cancer, praise the Lord." "I lost a leg in a car accident, hallelujah...." "Thank God, looks like Alzheimer's is setting in!"

Paul does not say that.... What does he say? "We do not want you to lose heart....." We don't want you to throw in the towel..... we don't want you to give up..... even with the slow process of aging it is easy to lose heart.....

I remember washing windows for a retirement community, and the average age was 84... I had someone say to me, "whoever said these are the golden years did not know what they were talking about." You can't see, you can't hear, you can't taste, you can't move, you are forgetful, you are becoming incontinent..... Paul is saying, "don't lose heart."

It is reminder during our gravest difficulties that this is not our home..... we know this because of what Paul says in chapter 5...

Paul calls the body we live in a tent..... a tent we know is temporary..... a tent is torn easily.... A tent only lasts a few seasons and you need to fix it or replace it.....and in this world we live in our bodies are easily torn .... But in heaven, we will have, according to verse 1, a building from God that is eternal in the heavens.....permanent and eternal instead of temporary and fragile....

And, notice that Paul is not denying the difficulties of living here..... he states in verse 2, "In this tent, we groan...." and in verse 4 he says the same thing, but after he states we groan, he adds, "being burdened." The word for groaning can mean that the groaning can be caused by severe

---

3 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 6:63). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

misery and oppression.... And the word burdened is the word Paul used in II Corinthians 1 where he and his companions were so burdened they despaired even of life....

The point is, our hope in heaven is not denying the realities of our pain on earth..... but it is just that, a hope in heaven.....And, much like the hope that our brothers and sisters had before Christ's first advent, while they were experiencing some of the things they were facing as they waited for the Messiah to come, we, too can groan, waiting for the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent, the return of the Lord Jesus to bring us to Himself.....we groan, being burdened, yet groan with hope....

So, Paul begins by talking about what we face physically..... but notice 2ndly, in verse 17 he mentions our afflictions and he calls them "light and momentary..." He states, "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,"<sup>4</sup>

The word afflictions is a word that has a broad meaning..... it could mean the persecutions that Paul faced by the hands of Jews and Gentiles.....it used to describe the anguish of childbirth.....It describes the afflictions that the orphans and widows face..... this is really capturing everything we experience in this life...

and, in comparison to eternity, Paul is calling everything we face, all of our affliction.....is both "momentary and light." Now, he is not saying, "nonexistent." Momentary and light in light of eternity.....I suppose if you break it down in time, a one year trial for someone who lives to be 100 is fairly short.....If you have a prodigal child that you pray for from the time you are 40 until you are 80, that would be a half of your life, a fairly long trial...

But, what is 40 years compared to 1000 years? What is 40 years compared to 10,000 years? What is 40 years compared to 1,000,000 years? What is 40 years compared to eternity?

I want to say this again.... Paul is not invalidating all that we feel on this earth..... the book of Psalms was written so we would have a place to go to and to pour out our complaints to God.....If you turn back a few pages to II Corinthians 1, notice verse 8,

"For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. <sup>9</sup> Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death."<sup>5</sup>

Paul is not denying the pain we feel when we face afflictions....here, he despaired of life.... He felt he was going to die.....turn over to II Corinthians 11.... and notice the list of afflictions he faced as an apostle... I will read from verse 23.... Paul is feeling forced to lay out some of the

---

4 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (2 Co 4:17). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

5 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (2 Co 1:8–9). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

things he has experienced as an apostle, since those in Corinth were questioning him and clinging to those who were not apostles at all..... and he's not holding anything back...

notice verse 23, "Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. <sup>24</sup> Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; <sup>26</sup> on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; <sup>27</sup> in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.<sup>6</sup>"

Now, clearly these are not momentary and light.....and Paul would have the physical scars to prove that these continue to last.....but, the point he is making is that even in these very grave afflictions, in light of eternity and all of it's blessing, they are momentary and light.....

and they are preparing him and our afflictions are preparing us for what he calls, "the eternal weight of glory that is beyond all comparison."

It is the same thing he said in Romans 8:18

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."<sup>7</sup>

Now, I want to keep stressing that Paul would be very sensitive to whatever difficulties you and I face in this life.... When his friend Epaphraditus was sick and nearly died, he commented that if he would have died, Paul would have had sorrow upon sorrow..... He is not advocating that only the spiritual matters and the physical has no merit or value or concern

But he is encouraging us to remember that this life is preparing us for eternity..... and however this world effects us..... if we are persecuted for our faith, if we suffer in poverty, if we suffer because of losing loved ones, if we suffer because of the sins of others, if we suffer though no fault of our own, and even if the suffering lasts for years and years and years.....in comparison to what God has in store for us in eternity, our sufferings are momentary and light.....

And, this is designed to be an encouragement to you and I.... there are believers in some cultures whose earthly life is absolutely horrible because of corrupt governments, no city infrastructure, little education, poor medicine, poverty, abuse, and more..... there have been and still are areas of the world where war, cruel dictators, and slavery still exists.....

---

6 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (2 Co 11:23–27). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

7 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ro 8:18). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

and, Paul's encouragement to them and to you, God's word to them and to you is, "Do not lose heart...." Jesus is going to bring you into his presence..... Jesus left, but he will bring you to Himself..... Hang in there.... Press on..... He rose from the dead, and he will raise you to eternal life with him....

And this brings us to our last point.....that we need to believe this by faith, not by sight.....verse 18, "as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. <sup>8</sup>

When we look at what we see, things are bleak, hopeless, and full of despair.....remember Hebrew 11 defines faith as the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen..... and, in this passage on eternity, Paul specifically states that he does not look at things that are seen..... if he did, he would be in complete despair...

What is seen is that he has been beat nearly to death..... what is seen is that all the work in Asia seemed like a complete waste because the defection that took place..... what is seen is that the churches in Galatia were on the brink of following a works based belief system.... In Corinth the church was in a state of division, people were suing one another, there was immorality, and even people getting drunk at the Lord's supper.....

Outside of the churches, he has been imprisoned, had many sleepless night, been exposed to cold, and hunger, and calamities.... And though all of these are real, when compared to the unseen, when compared to the eternal, Paul calls these difficulties, "transient." Which means, "pertaining to a relatively short period of time, with emphasis upon the temporary nature of the event or state—'not long, temporary, for a little while, for a while.'<sup>9</sup>"

Because our bodies are mortal, and we feel everything that happens to us in this life, it is hard for us to see and think on the unseen or think on eternity..... and to remember the comparison of the here and now to the then and there.....

But, throughout our lives there are things we have had to wait for.....and once you received or attained what you were waiting for, when you look back, you might say that it seemed like a long wait, while you were waiting, but now that you look back, it was not that bad.....

It could be that you could not wait until you graduated, or you could not wait until you go out on your own, or you were counting the days down from the time you were engaged, until the time you were married..... Of course, I am speaking from a man's point of view, but even the 9

---

8 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (2 Co 4:18). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

9 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 642). New York: United Bible Societies.

months of pregnancy and the labor and delivery, when you look back on it, seemed to come and go fairly quickly

In fact, Jesus uses child birth as an illustration in John 16:21 when he states

“When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.<sup>10</sup>”

Most of us who have witnessed or experienced child birth have seen this..... And we wonder, or at least I wondered, “Why would anyone in their right mind want to do this a 2<sup>nd</sup> time?” or a 3<sup>rd</sup> time or a 4<sup>th</sup> time..... most mom’s have said that once the baby is born, you do forget.... Until... until... that first monster contraction of your next delivery.....then you remember everything..... but when the 2<sup>nd</sup> baby is in your arms, you forget again.....

We get the point.....when there is a greater blessing around the corner, what we are experiencing is not as difficult.....the blessing a mother has of holding that life that was in her womb for 9 months makes all the discomfort of pregnancy, labor and delivery worth it....

And, when it comes to all that we face on this earth, whether because of our frail physical bodies, that are effected by illness, germs, bacteria, accidents and aging..... or whether it is because of all the things we face due to living in a world that is cursed by sin..... By faith, we look to what we cannot see.... that the earthly tent we live in one day will be replaced by a building that is made by God eternal in the heavens....By faith we look to the truth we know that the Lord Jesus will return and bring us into His presence..... that he will return for us and bring us to Himself.....

But, it is hard sometimes to believe this..... Rick, how do we really know? I know you said earlier that the return of Christ, the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ is anchored on the truth of the resurrection.... But that was a long time ago, and I wasn’t there to witness it.....Is there anything else that give us hope or confidence or guarantees that He will come for us?

I am so glad you asked, and I think Paul was answering this question before the Corinthians asked it, as well.....

Notice verse 5 of II Corinthians 5

“He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.<sup>11</sup>”

---

10 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 16:21). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

11 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (2 Co 5:5). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Here, Paul makes the claim that God himself is the one who has made all of these preparations and he has given us His Holy Spirit as a guarantee that everything that has been said will happen..... and it states it more than once, turn back a few pages to II Corinthians 1:21-22,

“And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us,<sup>22</sup> and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.<sup>12</sup>”

The Holy Spirit is a down payment for our place in heaven..... but it is not like a down payment on a house..... on a house, you need to give 5 or 10 or 20 percent down to get the loan.... You are the one who makes the down payment.... Your down payment guarantees the loan.....

God, however, gives believers the gift of the Holy Spirit.....He regenerates our hard hearts by the Holy Spirit..... this is our down payment..... we don't pay to get in, we don't work to get in, we don't deserve to get in..... He gives us His Spirit as a guarantee, as a down payment....He pays the down payment And that assures us of a place for us in heaven.....then, he is the one who pays off the loan..... He is the one who assures that the final payment is good....

This is so significant because, the truth is the only way you can look past the difficulty in this world, the only way you can see your affliction as momentary and light, the only way you can see past what is seen and have faith in the unseen is through the Spirit of God who lives in and through you.....

Romans 8 tells us that if you do not have the Spirit of Christ living in you, then you don't belong to Jesus.....How do you know you have the Spirit of God? The biggest proof in Scripture for the Spirit of God living in you is through the change that took place in your life when he regenerated you, and you repented of your sin, and trusted Christ to save you as you put your faith in his death, burial, and resurrection for your salvation.

And since that day, if you were truly born again, the Spirit resides in you, Christ is in you, you are a new creature in Christ, and for the rest of your life, the Holy Spirit in you will convict you of your sin, whenever you disobey.....

So.....if you can live your life anyway you want, lying, stealing, offending others, never asking for forgiveness, living immorally in secret..... if you can live a disobedient life with relative ease, with no conviction of sin..... then, there is a good chance the Spirit of God does not live in you.... And you have no guarantee or hope of eternal life..... without the Holy Spirit, you do not belong to Jesus and he will not come for you when he returns....

---

12 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (2 Co 1:21–22). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

But, you can resolve that this morning.....in your seat, I beg you, I implore you to admit to God that you know you are a sinner, and tell Him in prayer that you are repenting of the sin you are admitting to.... And you do believe that Jesus died and rose again to save you..... and ask Him to cleanse you, and forgive you.... Look to Him and Him alone for your salvation...

Then, come and talk to me or Brad about being baptized.... Demonstrate to the others that your old self has died, and you have been raised to New Life by the Holy Spirit who now resides in you and is your guarantee, your down payment that Jesus will come and take you to Himself.

The return of Christ is a comfort for our weary souls.....a healing for our broken bodies..... and a hope for all who suffer.....we anchor our faith on those two tremendous promises..... Jesus is the only way to the Father..... and He will come back for those who are His.....

As we close in song, pay attention to the verse that states,

“When he shall come with trumpet sound, may I then, in him be found, dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the Throne.” That is only possible through Christ, the Solid Rock....

MAY THE GOD WHO SAVES YOU, FILLS YOU WITH HIS HOLY SPIRIT KEEP YOU AND CONTINUE TO PREPARE YOU FOR THE DAY HE BRINGS YOU INTO HIS PRESENCE. MAY YOU KNOW HIM AS THE GUARANTEE OF YOUR SALVATION.